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Athanasian origin of the Athanasian creed



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THE ATHANASIAN ORIGIN

OF THE

Athanasian Creed

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THE ATHANASIAN ORIGIN

OF THE

Athanasian Creed

BY

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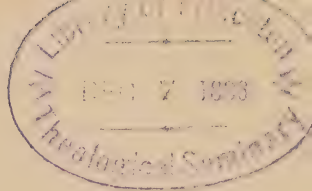
TO
THE RIGHT HONOURABLE
THE EARL OF BEAUCHAMP,

This Little Volume

IS
RESPECTFULLY DEDICATED.

ALMIGHTY AND EVERLASTING GOD, WHO HAST GIVEN UNTO US THY SERVANTS GRACE BY THE CONFESSION OF A TRUE FAITH TO ACKNOWLEDGE THE GLORY OF THE ETERNAL TRINITY, AND IN THE POWER OF THE DIVINE MAJESTY TO WORSHIP THE UNITY ;—WE BESEECH THEE, THAT THOU Wouldest KEEP US STEDFAST IN THIS FAITH, AND EVER-MORE DEFEND US FROM ALL ADVERSITIES, WHO LIVEST AND REIGNEST, ONE GOD, WORLD WITHOUT END. AMEN.

GLORY BE TO THEE, O LORD MOST HIGH ! WHO ART ONE GOD, ONE LORD ; NOT ONE ONLY PERSON, BUT THREE PERSONS IN ONE SUBSTANCE. FOR THAT WHICH WE BELIEVE OF THE GLORY OF THE FATHER, THE SAME WE BELIEVE OF THE SON, AND OF THE HOLY GHOST, WITHOUT ANY DIFFERENCE OR INEQUALITY.



PREFACE.

IN the following pages I have endeavoured to show :

1. The harmony of the Athanasian Creed with the teaching of St. Athanasius ;
2. The inadmissibility of Mr. Ffoulkes' theory ;
3. The absolute necessity of Creeds in a Christian Church ;
4. Reasons for retaining the Athanasian Creed unimpaired.

Since the time when my little book in vindication of our present authorized version of the Creed appeared, its opponents have changed their front more than once, thus affording the strongest possible reason why the two Houses of Convocation should not come, as the Archbishop urges, to an immediate and precipitate decision. The former objections, that the Creed was unorthodox and contradictory to the teaching of the Church, are heard no longer. In fact, many of those who urge its exclusion protest most vehemently against the supposition that in so doing they desire to

repudiate its teaching. We must then suppose that they regard its statements as Scriptural, Catholic, and charitable. With what consistency, then, they propose to banish from the Service a Creed which has continued amongst us for so many centuries, and has so many claims upon all Christians, it is not for me to determine. How the Athanasian Creed—as they propose—is still to be retained, but not used—that is, continue as a Creed or Confession of Faith, which no man shall be permitted to confess, I do not understand. Is it to remain in the Prayer Book as a monument to future generations of the truth which the Church of England once taught, but, through the influence of its archbishops and its spiritual rulers, has since thought fit to abandon? Is it to be preserved as a witness of Scriptural and Catholic doctrine (for if it be not Scriptural and Catholic why should it be retained?) which the bishops of the Church of England consented to ignore, out of concession to popular prejudice and popular ignorance? What then is to become of the Nicene Creed? What of all Scripture and of all doctrine that now or hereafter rises above the reach of popular intelligence, or offends against popular prejudice? Are we then to bring down the truth to the level of popular misconception, or to raise up the

minds of men to the appreciation of truths above and beyond their natural and unspiritualized reason?

We have arrived, as we are told, at the term of our decadence as a Church, and the abandonment of the Athanasian Creed will precipitate our fall. Year by year we are losing our grasp of the great Christian verities set before us in the Creed. The doctrine of the Trinity is fading away from us, and finds no place in our popular theology. Day by day the belief in the Trinity is settling down into a lazy acquiescence. The essential truths of the Gospel are less and less heard, until it has become a fashion among us to doubt whether they should be taught to the people at all. What is the result? The Church is rapidly losing its hold on the great masses of the population. And though never was there more activity of a certain kind in the Church than now; never more acts of charity; never were the clergy more willing than now to become all things to all men;—yet never was their power as spiritual guides and teachers less recognised and less felt. The laity, and the poor laity especially, are dying to hear the glad truths of the Gospel, and we cannot preach them; and though charity may be on our lips, it lies like ice at our hearts. To that cry for spiritual sustenance we reply by acts of courtesy and kindness, by doles of

books and blankets, by soup-kitchens and coal-clubs, by the bitterest pangs of self-accusation, by eloquent sermons, never more frequent; but that highest want of all—the spiritual longings of the poor—we cannot satisfy. And the reason is plain.

We have departed widely from the ways of our forefathers. We have ceased to appreciate and understand the ignorance of the poor and uninstructed. We have thought that the way to reach them was to give them what *we* have thought, not what God has thought, convenient for them. We have crammed them with moral lessons, and judged of the result by our own standard of apprehension; forgetting that to the poor the Gospel is preached—to them in its heights and depths and its unspeakable mysteries;—for them is the triumphant song of Almighty Love, as set forth in the Athanasian Creed; and by them, as by children, not yet corrupted by the world, not so much blinded as others are by its rules, its ambition and its philosophy, spiritual things are spiritually discerned, and live and grow in them, unseen though crescent in their faculty. Never did any bishop make a more grievous mistake than did the Bishop of Manchester, in his speech at the Northern Convocation, when he urged from his own experience, as a reason for rejecting the Creed, that all

his poorer congregation repeated it devoutly, but the only learned man, the squire of the parish, shut his book with a noisy clap and sate down. So, because the squire mistook his duty, and the poor tried to do theirs, the bishop infers we should take a lesson of wisdom from the former and despise the latter. In that inference he is, unfortunately for the Church of England, not singular. But so long as this notion prevails amongst us—so long as the clergy aim at the learned and not at the poor—or persuade themselves that the glory of the Trinity, and the mysteries of Redemption, and the mission and indwelling of the Holy Ghost—what is profanely called *dogmatism*—are beyond the reach and intellect of the poor and uneducated—so long will barrenness be the result of their teaching, and the coarsest ranter in earnest will be listened to sooner than they.

But, urged the bishop, the Creed is obscure, because the wit of man has endeavoured by it “to give out of its own resources additional definiteness beyond what was given in Holy Scripture to theological terms.” Suppose, then, the bishop found certain of the clergy in his own diocese denying the Godhead of the Holy Ghost—that is to say, His perfect equality with the Father and the Son—or the perfect humanity or di-

vinity of Christ—or refusing baptism to infants, as left indefinite in Scripture;—what would he do? Remonstrate with them, surely; out of Scripture, possibly out of the Creeds and formularies of the Church, of which he is an appointed interpreter and minister. What then would he say if the objectors turned round upon him with his own argument: “You, or the Church in your person, are attempting by your own wit to give a definiteness to Scriptural expressions, beyond what is found in Scripture?” Is not this the argument that dissenters now use against the Church of England, which Mr. Voysey uses, and for which he was condemned? Is not this precisely the argument brought by the Arians against Athanasius and the Nicene Creed? Is it not that for which the Greeks condemn the Western Church to this day?

We suppose that God gave His Word to the Church, and with it His Spirit also, to teach it all things. He gave the Word, great was the company of the preachers. That Word He has not withdrawn; has He withdrawn the Spirit necessary to its interpretation? To say that the words of the Creed are not the same as the words of Scripture is foolish. Certainly they are not in one sense; nor is any other part of our Service Book; for the Scripture is in Hebrew and in Greek, and they are

in English. Nor are we bound by the letter, but by the spirit. The question is not whether the Athanasian Creed be more or less ingeniously and definitively worded than Scripture; for the same might be said of the Church Catechism—but whether its expressions fairly and honestly represent the teaching of Scripture. If they are obscure, is that obscurity owing to the words or the matter? If to the words, will the bishop find clearer ones? If to the matter, there is nothing more to be said, except the bishop will allege that the doctrine of the Holy Trinity is too obscure a subject to be taught to the members of the Church of England; or to be taught fully and correctly.

But what has the judgment of the rich or the educated to do with this question? The Church exists not exclusively for them; and if the Church of Christ were drowned beneath the depths of the sea, the rich and the learned would not suffer; they would still have as before their prophets, their Gospel, their evangelists. But the poor would have nothing. They would lose their portion in that kingdom which is peculiarly theirs, if not theirs by exclusive inheritance. It is not what this class or that may think, it is not what this text or that may seem to warrant, or this notion or that of the individual conscience, which is to de-

termine the rejection or retention of the Athanasian Creed; for the Church is Catholic, and its teaching must comprehend all. Its Creeds and its constitution are to be judged not by individual but by universal experience; not by to-day but always; not by their positive effects alone but by their tendencies as well. Its operations, like those of its Divine Master, are for the good of all; for the necessities and the spiritual relief of all. With a teachable spirit every man may find in the Church and its Creeds what is for his soul's health and his soul's comfort. And every man who measures it by his own standard will find in it something beyond him;—that which is wiser than he, the fulness of which he cannot comprehend; and more important than he, the importance of which he may be slow to recognize; that also which is more divine and spiritual than he. For on the Church the Spirit of God is poured without stint and without measure; not only because it is God's appointed instrument for teaching mankind, and God gives a special and sacramental grace to the means of His own appointment, but because the Church is the body of Christ; that is to say, the body of Him who is the Only Begotten of the Father.

The Church then must guide and teach. It is for this purpose it exists, and it cannot renounce its

essential functions. But guiding and teaching are not required in ordinary duties or in plain and obvious truths. They are clear of themselves, and carry their own recommendation with them. The common sense and practice of mankind prevent their neglect or flagrant transgression. The injury from their neglect is besides far from irreparable. But it is otherwise with great, permanent, and mysterious verities, such as form the subject of the Athanasian Creed. It is in these that the clear and determinate voice of the Church is required; for such verities are of themselves more difficult to comprehend; the loss more perilous and of greater consequence; the transgression less obvious.

For the great mass of the laity, for them who have little leisure and few books, or who lack the ability to search for themselves, the express teaching of the Church is indispensable; lest they should be as sheep having no shepherd, and fall a prey, as they certainly would fall, to false teachers. He must be very little acquainted with the history and literature of the Church, in the fourth century, who can persuade himself that the minute distinctions and repetitions of the Athanasian Creed were superfluous. Still less must he be acquainted with human nature who imagines

that because by the use of the Athanasian Creed necessity for them apparently exists no longer, we can afford to dispense with the Creed, as if such necessity would never occur again. This would be to follow the example of foolish politicians, who, blinded by the tranquillity and prosperity arising from sound and established principles, think this is a sufficient reason for getting rid of them, and so bring all things into irreparable confusion. Let the Church, then, exercise its functions, not appalled by the magnitude of its task or the difficulties of its office. God's grace is sufficient for it. And as God has commanded so let it magnify its office, not for its own sake, but for His glory; certain of God's presence and help if it does its duty, if it abides by His teaching, however strange and mysterious the consequences, indifferent to the censures of the world.

THE ATHANASIAN ORIGIN OF THE CREED.

The Athanasian Creed.

1. Whosoever will be saved, before all things it is necessary that he hold the Catholick Faith.

2. Which Faith except every one do keep whole and undefiled, without doubt he shall perish everlastingly.

3. And the Catholick Faith is this: That we worship one God in Trinity, and Trinity in Unity;

4. Neither confounding the Persons, nor dividing the Substance.

5. For there is one Person of the Father, another of the Son, and another of the Holy Ghost.

6. But the Godhead of the Father, of the Son, and of the Holy Ghost, is all one, the Glory equal, the Majesty co-eternal.

7. Such as the Father is, such is the Son; and such is the Holy Ghost.

8. The Father uncreate, the Son uncreate, and the Holy Ghost uncreate:

1. Quicumque vult salvus esse, ante omnia opus est ut teneat Catholicam Fidem;

2. Quam nisi quisque integram inviolatamque servaverit, absque dubio in æternum peribit.

3. Fides autem Catholica hæc est, ut unum Deum in Trinitate, et Trinitatem in Unitate veneremur;

4. Neque confundentes Personas, neque Substantiam separantes.

5. Alia est enim Persona Patris, alia Filii, alia Spiritus Sancti:

6. Sed Patris, et Filii, et Spiritus Sancti, una est Divinitas, æqualis Gloria, coæterna Majestas.

7. Qualis Pater, talis Filius, talis Spiritus Sanctus.

8. Increatus Pater, increatus Filius, increatus Spiritus Sanctus:

9. The Father incomprehensible, the Son incomprehensible, and the Holy Ghost incomprehensible.

10. The Father eternal, the Son eternal, and the Holy Ghost eternal.

11. And yet they are not three eternals, but one eternal.

12. As also there are not three incomprehensibles, nor three uncreated; but one uncreated and one incomprehensible.

13. So likewise the Father is Almighty, the Son Almighty, and the Holy Ghost Almighty.

14. And yet they are not three Almighties, but one Almighty.

15. So the Father is God, the Son is God, and the Holy Ghost is God.

16. And yet they are not three Gods, but one God.

17. So likewise the Father is Lord, the Son Lord, and the Holy Ghost Lord.

18. And yet not three Lords, but one Lord.

19. For like as we are compelled by the Christian verity, to acknowledge every Person by himself to be God and Lord;

20. So are we forbidden by the Catholick religion to say: there be three Gods, or, three Lords.

9. Immensus Pater, immensus Filius, immensus Spiritus Sanctus:

10. Æternus Pater, æternus Filius, æternus Spiritus Sanctus.

11. Et tamen non tres Æterni; sed unus Æternus.

12. Sicut non tres Increati, nec tres Immensi, sed unus Increatus et unus Immensus.

13. Similiter Omnipotens Pater, Omnipotens Filius, Omnipotens Spiritus Sanctus;

14. Et tamen non tres Omnipotentes, sed unus Omnipotens.

15. Ita Deus Pater, Deus Filius, Deus Spiritus Sanctus;

16. Et tamen non tres Dii, sed unus est Deus.

17. Ita Dominus Pater, Dominus Filius, Dominus Spiritus Sanctus.

18. Et tamen non tres Domini, sed unus est Dominus.

19. Quia sicut, sigillatim, unamquamque Personam Deum et Dominum confiteri Christiana veritate compellimur,

20. Ita tres Deos aut Dominos dicere Catholica religione prohibemur.

21. The Father is made of none; neither created, nor begotten.

22. The Son is of the Father alone; not made, nor created, but begotten.

23. The Holy Ghost is of the Father and of the Son; neither made, nor created, nor begotten, but proceeding.

24. So there is one Father, not three Fathers; one Son, not three Sons; one Holy Ghost, not three Holy Ghosts.

25. And in this Trinity none is afore or after other; none is greater or less than another;

26. But the whole three Persons are co-eternal together, and co-equal.

27. So that in all things, as is aforesaid, the Unity in Trinity, and the Trinity in Unity, is to be worshipped.

28. He therefore that will be saved must thus think of the Trinity.

21. Pater a nullo est factus, nec creatus, nec genitus.

22. Filius a Patre solo est, non factus, nec creatus, sed genitus.

23. Spiritus Sanctus a Patre et Filio, non factus, nec creatus, nec genitus, sed procedens.

24. Unus ergo Pater, non tres Patres, unus Filius, non tres Filii, unus Spiritus Sanctus, non tres Spiritus Sancti.

25. Et in hac Trinitate, nihi prius, aut posterius; nihil majus aut minus;

26. Sed totæ tres Personæ cœternæ sibi sunt et cœquales.

27. Ita ut, per omnia, sicut jam supra dictum est, et Unitas in Trinitate et Trinitas in Unitate veneranda sit.

28. Qui vult ergo salvus esse, ita de Trinitate sentiat.

§

29. Furthermore, it is necessary to everlasting salvation, that he also believe rightly the Incarnation of our Lord Jesus Christ.

30. For the right Faith is,

29. Sed necessarium est ad æternam salutem ut Incarnationem quoque Domini nostri Jesu Christi fideliter credat.

30. Est ergo Fides recta, ut

that we believe and confess, that our Lord Jesus Christ, the Son of God, is God and Man;

31. God, of the substance of the Father, begotten before the worlds; and Man of the Substance of His Mother, born in the world;

32. Perfect God, and perfect Man, of a reasonable soul and human flesh subsisting.

33. Equal to the Father, as touching His Godhead, and inferior to the Father, as touching His Manhood.

34. Who although He be God and Man, yet He is not two, but one Christ;

35. One; not by conversion of the Godhead into flesh, but by taking of the Manhood into God;

36. One altogether; not by confusion of Substance, but by unity of Person.

37. For, as the reasonable soul and flesh is one man; so God and Man is one Christ;

38. Who suffered for our salvation; descended into Hell; rose again the third day from the dead.

39. He ascended into Heaven; He sitteth on the right hand of the Father, God Almighty; from whence He shall come to judge the quick and the dead.

credamus et confiteamur quia Dominus noster Jesus Christus, Dei Filius, Deus et homo est;

31. Deus est ex substantia Patris ante sæcula genitus; et homo est ex substantia matris, in sæculo natus.

32. Perfectus Deus, perfectus homo, ex anima rationali et humana carne subsistens.

33. Æqualis Patri secundum divinitatem, minor Patre secundum humanitatem.

34. Qui licet Deus sit et homo, non duo tamen, sed unus est Christus;

35. Unus autem non conversione divinitatis in carnem, sed assumptione humanitatis in Deum;

36. Unus omnino, non confusione substantiæ, sed unitate Personæ.

37. Nam sicut anima rationalis et caro, unus est homo, ita Deus et homo unus est Christus;

38. Qui passus est pro salute nostra; descendit ad inferos; tertia die resurrexit a mortuis;

39. Ascendit ad cœlos; sedet ad dexteram Dei Patris Omnipotentis; inde venturus est iudicare vivos et mortuos.

40. At whose coming all men shall rise again with their bodies, and shall give account for their own works;

41. And they that have done good shall go into life everlasting; and they that have done evil into everlasting fire.

42. This is the Catholick Faith; which except a man believe faithfully he cannot be saved.

40. Ad cujus adventum omnes homines resurgere habent cum corporibus suis, et reddituri sunt de factis propriis rationem;

41. Et qui bona egerunt, ibunt in vitam æternam, qui vero mala in ignem æternum.

42. Hæc est Fides Catholica, quam nisi quisque fideliter firmiterque crediderit, salvus esse non poterit.

(*Secundum usum Sarum.*)

IN my previous remarks upon the Athanasian Creed it was enough for me to prove that our authorized English version agreed with the voice of antiquity. I have shown that wherever our Reformers departed from the strict letter of the Latin copy, in the Sarum breviary, they were not led into error through ignorance, as some of their recent oppugners have asserted, nor were they guilty of intentionally disseminating heresy, as others have unwarrantably accused them. I might have multiplied these proofs to a much greater length had it been required, but I was unwilling to inflict upon my readers a larger array of authorities in so obvious a matter. I now propose to carry the investigation a little further, and to examine

what evidence is furnished by the Creed itself, the writings of St. Athanasius and some of his contemporaries, for supposing that the Creed is of Athanasian origin; that is to say, if not directly derived from Athanasius himself yet composed not long after the Athanasian era. The inquiry is a momentous one, when we are called upon to surrender a confession of our faith which has withstood for so many centuries the attacks of the gainsayers—a confession which its sharpest and bitterest opponents have never yet been able to convict of unscriptural statements, or to show that it departs, in any respect, from the teaching of the Church in its purest ages. It is true, as Waterland states—and it is necessary to remember, for the very reverse has been asserted of late—“that our Church receives not this Creed upon the authority of its compiler, nor determines anything about its age or author.” “We receive it,” he adds, “because the truth of the doctrines contained in it *may be proved by most certain warrants of Holy Scripture*, as is expressly said in our VIIIth. Article. I may add, that the early and general reception of this Creed by Greeks and Latins, by all the Western Churches, not only before, but since the Reformation, must needs give it a much greater authority and weight than the single name of Athanasius

could do, were it ever so justly to be set to it.”¹ But since it has been taken for granted, and positively asserted, that this Creed can have no higher antiquity than the age of Charlemagne and Alcuin, it may be worth while to consider what evidence there is for an earlier origin. Even if such inquiry should not altogether convince the bishops of the English Church, it may incline them to pause before they consent to modify or abrogate the Athanasian Creed.

Of the heresies which disturbed the Church from its foundation to the death of Athanasius and to the close of the 4th century, we have abundant notices in the works of two contemporaries of the great Greek Father, Epiphanius, and Philastrius bishop of Brescia, the one a Greek, the other a Latin. Epiphanius, who was a native of Palestine and bishop of Constantia, in Cyprus, in the middle of the 4th century, died at a very advanced age, A.D. 403. His treatise on Heresy (*Adversus Hæreses*) was commenced A.D. 374. Philastrius flourished at a still earlier date, and though the year of his death is uncertain, it is agreed upon all hands that it could not have been later than A.D. 388. It is to Philastrius we owe such passages as these: “Separant se a Catholica Ecclesia non intelligentes quod *qualis immensus est Pater*,

¹ Waterland on A. C. ch. xi.

talis est et Filius, talis est et Spiritus Sanctus." (Cap. li.)¹
 "Vera persona Patris . . . vera persona Filii . . .
 vera persona Spiritus . . . Trium itaque harum personarum una est veritas, majestas, et substantiæ æqualitas et divinitas sempiterna." (Cap. xciii.)² "Trinitatem quidem personarum, unius tamen majestatis et substantiæ ac divinitatis æqualem potentiam nuntiabat." (Cap. cix.) That such expressions as these were not occasional or accidental, but formed part of some general confession or Creed of the Church before the close of the 4th century, is rendered probable by the following words addressed by Paulinus³ of Nola to Victricius, bishop of Rouen: "*Cum ergo fides et confessio tua (ut credimus atque confidimus) co-æternam Trinitatem unius Divinitatis et substantiæ et operis et regni esse testetur, cumque . . . doces Unitatem Trinitatis sine confusione jungens et Trinitatem ipsius Unitatis sine separatione distinguens. . . . et tantus quidem Filius, quantus et Pater, quantus et Spiritus Sanctus,*" &c. (Ep. xxvii.) So St. Ambrose: "Sanctus

¹ Composed of two verses of the Creed: "Qualis Pater, talis Filius, talis Spiritus Sanctus. Immensus Pater, immensus Filius, immensus Spiritus Sanctus."

² "Alia est Persona Patris, alia Filii, alia Spiritus Sancti. Sed Patris et Filii et Spiritus Sancti una est Divinitas, æqualis gloria, coæterna majestas."

³ Paulinus was born A.D. 353.

ergo Pater et perfectus Pater, sanctus etiam et perfectus Filius . . . Talis ergo qualis est Deus. . . . Increatus Pater, increatus et Filius; quia non minor Pater, non minor Filius; quia omnipotens Pater, omnipotens Filius." (De Inc. x. § 142.) And again: "Pater et Filius unum sunt, non confusione Personæ sed unitate naturæ." (De Fide. i. § 9.) In fact, these and similar modes of expression, which seem so hard and scholastic and the growth of a later age, were at a very early period forced upon the Church in its controversy with Arius. It was necessary to show that the same attributes of the Godhead were in Scripture applied to the Son, which Arius claimed exclusively for the Father; and when, after Arius died, the Godhead of the Holy Spirit was denied, it was reasonable that the very same expressions which had been applied to the Son should be extended to the Third Person of the Trinity. But whatever else may be thought of these and similar passages—too numerous to be noticed here—thus much may be fairly inferred:—that the peculiar phraseology of the Athanasian Creed, which it has been supposed must be necessarily referred to the 9th century, was already in vogue some years before the close of the 4th; and if it fell within the scope of my present inquiry to refer to writers of more recent date

than Philastrius, such parallelisms might be produced in abundance.

On turning to the Creed itself, it will be seen that it is divided into two parts. In the former, it is engaged in establishing and explaining the true faith as to the Unity of the Three Persons in One God, commencing with these words: "And the Catholic Faith is this, that we worship One God in Trinity, and Trinity in Unity." This earlier portion closes with the words of the 28th verse: "He therefore that will be saved must thus think (*sentiat*) of the Trinity." In the latter half the Creed is occupied with the doctrine of the Incarnation, introducing this division of the subject with the words: "Furthermore, it is necessary to everlasting salvation that he *also* believe *rightly* (*fideliter*)¹ the Incarnation of our Lord Jesus Christ. For the *right* Faith is," &c. Where it is to be noticed that the prefatory remarks prefixed to this division of the Creed correspond to the two introductory verses of the whole Creed, on which so much discussion has been heard of late. But though the Godhead of the Holy Ghost, like that of the Son, has been clearly set forth in the first part of the Creed, there is no corresponding explanation of His Divine economy, as

¹ ὁρθῶς in some Greek copies, βεβαίως in others.

there is of the nature and operations of the Son in the second part. In this respect the Athanasian corresponds with the Nicene Creed, in its earliest form, and presents a striking contrast to the Apostles' Creed.¹ I think this omission must often have struck every thoughtful reader. The fact is important. At the date of the Nicene Council, A.D. 325, the Church was chiefly solicitous to establish the divine equality of the Father and the Son; for the denial of that equality was the prevalent error of the times. That was the heresy which, beginning from an earlier period, exercised a peculiar fascination over the minds of Oriental Christians. Their social, their political, their philosophical instincts were wholly antagonistic to the divine equality of the Father and the Son; their

¹ The same observation will apply to the Creed of Epiphanius, or, as it is called, his "Exposition of the Faith of the Catholic Church." The framers of the Nicene Creed were satisfied with expressing their belief in the Holy Spirit, by the words: "I believe in the Holy Ghost." This expression was enlarged by the Constantinopolitan Synod, A.D. 381; and it added to the Creed: "I believe in the Holy Ghost, the Lord and giver of Life;" *the Lord*, as against the heresy of Macedonius, who degraded the third Person of the Trinity into a servant or minister; *giver of life*, in reference to John v. 21; and by the words, "who with the Father and the Son is worshipped and glorified," it was intended to convey that the Holy Ghost is co-eternal and co-equal with the Father and the Son, and therefore is not worshipped solely on the Father's account, or in the person of the Father.

long-established belief in two distinct and original principles, at constant warfare with each other, was irreconcilable with the complete Unity and yet distinct personality of the Father and the Son. The whole of Eastern Christendom was in danger of being drawn away by the delusions of Arianism. That heresy was a condescension to popular weakness and inveterate prejudices, precisely as the abolition of the Athanasian Creed is now boldly urged on the same ground, not only by those who consider it unsound, but by those even who are "thoroughly convinced of *its scriptural truth*, and of its demonstrable consistency with good logic, sound morality, and the most tender and liberal Christian charity."¹ And, moreover, like all false faith, Arianism was apparently so like the real faith—the difference turned on a single word, rather on a letter only²—that the very elect were liable to be deceived. For that one letter Athanasius wrote, and suffered; unlike us, who are willing to surrender Articles and Creeds and our most solemn convictions of the truth itself, not to Arian bishops but to senseless

¹ See the letter of a London Incumbent in "The Times," January 5, 1872. I have read this letter with extreme regret. "Get thee unto the children of thy people, and speak unto them and tell them: 'Thus saith the Lord God'—whether they will hear, or whether they will forbear." Ezekiel iii. 11.

² ὁμοιούσιον and ὁμοούσιον.

clamour, or rigid ignorance. With this care the Church was engrossed. Errors respecting the Holy Spirit were scarcely yet of sufficient importance or notoriety to attract attention. It was only by slow degrees that the Church was brought to examine carefully the foundations of the faith in their length and breadth; and that not all at once but as occasion demanded. Persecution and heresy drew out, in its fulness, the truth that had long lain dormant or unperceived. "The two Testaments," says Gregory of Nazianzum, "were not suddenly changed. God was our School-master. . . . It was not safe that the Godhead of the Son should be proclaimed, until the Godhead of the Father had been fully acknowledged; nor until the Godhead of the Son was established, was it safe that we should be overweighted (if I may say it) beyond our strength with [discussing the divinity of] the Holy Ghost."¹ "Our (Nicene) Fathers," says St.

¹ Oratio De Spiritu xxxi. § 26. In the Synodical letter of Amphilochius, bishop of Iconium, written about 377, the following remark occurs: "It was necessary for the Nicene fathers to enlarge upon the doctrine of the *Unigenitus*, since they endeavoured to root out the Arian heresy which had then recently sprung up . . . but as no discussion had arisen at that time respecting the Holy Spirit they said nothing more. To him, indeed, who reads thoughtfully the teaching of the Nicene Creed respecting the Holy Spirit it will appear sufficient . . . But since Satan has lately attempted to disturb the Church and sow doubts in the minds of some respecting

Basil,¹ “touched upon this part *in transitu*, because at that time no controversy had sprung up about the Holy Spirit.” A simple confession of the Holy Ghost, as the third divine Person in the Trinity, with the Father and the Son, was deemed sufficient.

But this omission in the Athanasian Creed would lead us to infer, in whatever language it might have been composed, that it was in existence, at all events, before A.D. 381, the date of the Synod of Constantinople,—earlier perhaps than the last writings of Athanasius, and his letter addressed to Serapion.² It was a common tradition that the Creed which bears his name the Holy Spirit, it is necessary to recur to the fountain of the faith.” —Concilia Harduini, I. 799.

¹ Epist. 258 (written A.D. 377 circa). Compare a longer passage to the same effect in Epist. 125. That certain Confessions of Faith had been put forth after the Nicene Council A.D. 325 and A.D. 375, and were in some repute, is shown by the words of the same Father. “I prefer,” he says, “the Nicene Creed to all confessions of faith which have since been devised, because of the term *ὁμοούσιος*” (Epist. 159). Now this term does not occur in the Athanasian Creed; and that is a sufficient answer to the objection why, supposing it existed at the time, it was not quoted by St. Basil. It is also a strong presumption in favour of the Athanasian origin of the Creed. For though, as I have shown in my previous book, Athanasius not only uses but defends the use of the word *ὁμοούσιος*, on more than one occasion, he was neither so much attached to it as St. Basil, nor so precise in insisting on it. He might, therefore, be content to employ an equivalent for it in the Creed, supposing it to be his: *sc.* “Deus ex Substantia Patris.”

² Athanasius died A.D. 371 or 372.

was written by him A.D. 341, and addressed to Pope Julius I. Whatever this tradition may be worth, this is the period which might be assumed not without probability for the date of the Creed. The objection generally accepted, without question, that Athanasius did not understand Latin, rests on no sufficient evidence, and is in itself highly improbable. That the greatest portion of his works—for a small proportion of them only have come down to us—should be written in the tongue of those to whom they were addressed, that he should exclusively use the Greek in refuting those heresies which existed among the Greeks, and were scarcely known in the Western Church, was reasonable enough.¹ But that in Alexandria—the most celebrated emporium in the world, filled with Latin residents and merchants, celebrated for its schools in which Greek and Latin were alike taught—that in such a city a man of the genius and application of Athana-

¹ Some think that the Creed was written in A.D. 341, as a Profession of Faith (*Fides Athanasii*), to obtain communion with the Roman Church; a practice not uncommon with strangers who desired admission into a foreign communion. Some think, on the other hand, that the Creed was composed during the Alexandrine Synod, in A.D. 363, when the subject of the Holy Spirit came under discussion; and that the Latin translation of it was made by Eusebius of Vercelli, who was at the Synod.—Saccarelli, H. E. v. 232. Such a practice was common.

sus, strongly prepossessed in favour of the Latin Church, and upon intimate terms with the Latin bishops, should have been ignorant of the Latin language, is far more improbable than that a well-educated public man in England should know nothing of French, because in his ordinary employments he used nothing but English. It must be remembered also that Athanasius, between the years 341 and 342, had passed eighteen months at Rome, in close fellowship with the Latin clergy—was honourably entertained by them as a great and illustrious sufferer for the truth. Less opportunities than these would have sufficed a man of his ability to read and write the Latin tongue of the fourth century. But on this point there is scarcely room for conjecture. The letter addressed by him to Luciferus, about the year 355, leaves no reasonable doubt that Athanasius understood and used the Latin tongue; and his Benedictine editors reluctantly admit as much, though they seem to have forgotten this admission in their remarks prefixed to his Latin Creed.¹

I have but one more remark to add to this part of

¹ See the letter, I. p. 770, of the Paduan edition. In addressing this Lucifer, Athanasius writes as follows: "O vere Lucifer, qui juxta nomen lumen veritatis ferens posuisti super candelabrum;" the play upon the name is only possible on the supposition that the letter was written in Latin. Its authenticity has never been disputed.

my subject. Whatever opinion we may entertain of the worth of the Athanasian Creed, it is certain that the Greek Fathers, in their disputes with the heretics of their times, would in general prefer, like St. Basil, the Nicene Creed, fortified by the authority of more than three hundred bishops. Still more, if the Athanasian Creed were written in Latin, owing to the jealousy of the Greeks and their general contempt for the Latin theology, a Latin formulary of faith would scarcely be used in these discussions. The Nicene Creed was a practical illustration of the Church's maxim—*quod semper, quod ubique, quod ab omnibus*. It was the deliberate determination of bishops drawn from all parts of the world, who could have had no previous intelligence with each other, nor been influenced by party or local considerations. It was a great and solemn parliament of the Church, assembled, as no previous synod had been, to determine the truth and meaning of Scripture as to our Lord's Incarnation and Godhead. The teaching of Athanasius was that of a single doctor, whose greatness, like that of all truly great men, was not fully recognised at the time; whose wisdom age has justified, and ages alone have been able to appreciate. Copies of his works were exceedingly rare, and we know from his own lips, so great was

his modesty, that no one was more dissatisfied with his writings than he was himself, so much in his own estimation did they fall short "of the height of his great argument." He was unwilling to have transcripts made of them, and by these and other causes so large a portion of his labours have irretrievably perished. Moreover, Arianism, crushed by Athanasius, rapidly changed its form. It had done so even in his own days; *alter sed idem*. The tragical deaths of Arius, of Valens, and others, had brought Arianism itself into contempt. Communication between Eastern and Western Christendom became more rare and more difficult from various causes; of these not the least was the transfer of the seat of empire, the sack of Rome by Alaric, and the invasions of Attila and the Huns.¹ The Western Church had its own Creed. It was beginning to regard Greek Fathers and teachers with dislike and suspicion; and though wiser men knew better, yet in their writings against heresy, addressed to a general audience, there was no necessity to refer to the Creed or writings of Athanasius to determine points of doctrine already determined by their own popes, bishops, and synods. The silence of both Churches as to this Creed may very well be accounted for, even if the name

¹ The division of East and West took place A.D. 395.

and writings of Athanasius had been more widely known than they appear to have been in the fifth and sixth centuries.¹

I proceed now to consider what evidence is furnished by the Creed itself as to its Athanasian origin.

The Creed commences with the words "Whosoever will be saved," or whosoever willeth to be saved (*vult salvus esse*); whosoever wishes to become a Christian, and embrace that salvation which Christ preached and enjoined His Apostles to proclaim, "before all things it is necessary that he hold the Catholic faith," *i.e.*, the Christian faith—that faith which Christ taught, and all who have really embraced that faith have held and are bound to hold. *Faith*—because unlike the law of Moses—faith is the foundation and commencement of a Christian life; *Catholic*, because "there is none other name under heaven given unto men by which they may be saved." By no other name than that of Christ shall a man be able "to stand in the judgment."²

¹ Nothing, for instance, can be more jejune or incomplete than the account of his writings given by St. Jerome. Yet St. Jerome was by no means deficient in learning and industry.

² Compare this with the 1st Psalm, which is a similar profession of faith under the old law, as the Athanasian Creed is under the new. "What shall I do to obtain eternal life?" is the tacit question which the Psalmist answers: "Blessed is the man that hath not walked in the counsel of the ungodly, nor stood in the way of

And the second verse is a necessary consequence from the first; for if, in order to be saved, it is *necessary* "to hold the Catholic faith," that faith is necessary to salvation: men cannot be saved without it; that is, they must perish without it. They must keep it *whole*; not taking so much of it as pleases them and rejecting what they dislike; and *undefiled* with errors of their own or others' invention; for otherwise the faith would be neither true, whole, nor Catholic.

Now whatever may be thought of this teaching it is strictly in accordance with that of Athanasius himself, as will be seen by the following passages. "Whoever blasphemes (speaks against) any one Person (*ὑποστάσεων*) in the Trinity has no forgiveness, neither in this world nor yet in the world to come; but God can open the eyes," &c. (*Omnia mihi*, &c. I. 86). "Can they belong to the Catholic Church who have (like the Arians) thrown off the faith of the Apostles?" (*Cont. Arian. I. 321*). "The Arians who have departed from the true *Λόγος*, and

sinner," &c. And he concludes, like our Creed: "Therefore the ungodly shall not be able to stand in the judgment; neither the sinners in the congregation of the righteous. But the Lord knoweth the way of the righteous; and the way of the ungodly shall perish." Only our modern objectors to the Creed are mere Judaizers, or worse. They think there is nothing ungodly except in the transgression of the moral law, not understanding that as faith keeps the whole law, want of faith breaks the whole law.

framed for themselves a non-existent one, have fallen into non-entity (everlasting destruction, *μηδέν*),”¹ *ib.* 324. “Whoever holds the opinions of Arius cannot be considered a Christian,” *ib.* 223. “They who call the Arians Christians err greatly,” *ib.* 320. “He who divides the Father from the Son, or regards the Holy Spirit as a created being, has neither the Father nor the Son, but is impious, and worse than an unbeliever, and in no sense a Christian.” (Ad Serap. I. 542.) See numerous other passages: pp. 184, 185, 327, 519.²

2. The Creed then proceeds to state summarily what that faith is which it considers as “Catholic and Apostolic” (Ath. I. 127), “the faith of the Church” (*ib.* 165), “the faith of the Catholic Church” (*ib.* 183), that is, of the congregation of all faithful people, in all times, and not of the year 1872 only; dispersed throughout the world, and not confined to England alone. It proceeds to tell us what is that great bond of union of saints in earth with saints in Heaven, the sure and strong foundation upon which we and all that shall be saved are built up, and knit together in that

¹ Compare Paulinus of Nola: “Ne simus nihil si ab uno excidamus.” p. 373, Epist. xlii.

² Compare St. Ambrose: “Nemo potest resurrectionis gloriam videre nisi qui integrum mysterium Trinitatis incorrupta fidei sinceritate servaverit.”—Ambros. in Luc. vii. § 9.

everlasting communion, which “was, and is, and is to come;” whatever be the little differences among ourselves, of home or place, or nation or opinion. “The Catholic faith is this: ‘That we worship one God in Trinity, and Trinity in Unity;’ one God in three Persons, and three Persons in one God:”¹ *one God*, as distinguishing the Christian faith from that of the Gentiles, who made many Gods; and from the faith of the Jews, who, by denying the Divine Personality of the Son and the Holy Ghost, lost also the abiding sense of the Divine Personality of the Father; as all men and all nations, sooner or later, must do who lose their hold of this great truth, “One God in Trinity, and Trinity in Unity.” “The faith of Christians,” says Athanasius, “confesses an unchangeable, perfect, invariable, and Blessed Trinity; and adores and keeps the undivided Unity of the Godhead, abhorring the blasphemies of the Arians.” (i. Cont. Arian. I. 333.) “The Holy and Blessed Trinity is undivided and united in itself. Wherever mention is made of the Father, there is also mention of His Word, and in the Son (ἐν τῷ υἱῷ), the Holy Spirit.” (Ad Serap. p. 530.) “They (the Tropici) ought to admit and acknowledge

¹ “Solus Deus, quia una divinitas Trinitatis est.”—Ambros. De Fide, iii. 3. “For the Trinity is in Unity, and there is One God, Father, Son, and Holy Ghost.”—Epiph. Ancor. ii. §. 2.

what is written, and join the Father with the Son, and not divide the Spirit from the Son, that the undivided and homogeneous (nature) of the Holy Trinity may remain (unimpaired). And understanding these things, they are not to be so bold or to inquire, doubtfully, how these things can be ; lest if he who is asked such questions should find it difficult to answer, they should still more confirm themselves in their folly and their falsehood ; (ἐπινοῶσιν αὐτοὶ κακονόλας ἑαυτοῖς). For this applies to all creation and to us men in particular, that it is impossible for us to speak adequately concerning mysteries that cannot be explained in words." (*Ib.* 532.) "Let us consider the tradition, doctrine, and faith of the Catholic Church, which the Lord gave, and the Apostles preached, and the Fathers held ; for on this the Church is founded, and he who falls from it *is not, and cannot be reckoned* a Christian. There is a perfect and Holy Trinity, acknowledged in the Father, Son, and Holy Spirit, admitting nothing that is foreign or external to itself . . . homogeneous in itself and undivided, and one in its operations. For the Father, by the Word, does all things in the Holy Spirit, and thus the Unity of the Holy Trinity is preserved. So One God is preached in the Church, who *is above all, and through all, and in all.* (Ephes. iv. 6.)

Above all, as the Father of all, or the beginning and source of all things. *Through all*, through His Word (διὰ τοῦ Λόγου); and in all in His Holy Spirit. And this Trinity rests not in the phantasy of words only, but in deed and in truth. For as there is a very and real Father, so is there His very and true Word, who is also God over all; so also there is a Holy Spirit truly and really subsisting (ὑπάρχει καὶ ὑφέστηκεν ἀληθῶς). And this is the doctrine of the Catholic Church." (*Ibid.* p. 541.)

The verses which follow this part of the Creed to the close of the 28th verse are only an expansion of what has been already said, and they were intended to secure the believer from various errors into which many of the clergy and laity had fallen by the subtlety of false teachers. Not, indeed, that the Church attempts to define these great mysteries, but only to guard them from the false definitions and erroneous assertions of other men; preserving them in their original breadth and comprehensiveness from that tendency to which all great truths are liable, of being narrowed down to the notions of particular ages and individual teachers. "For," says Athanasius, "though we are not able to comprehend what God is, we are able to say what He is not." (*Ad Monachos*, I. 272.)

3. We resume: "The Catholic faith is this; that we worship one God in Trinity, and Trinity in Unity;" neither, like the Sabellians, "confounding the Persons;" nor like the Arians, "dividing the substance;"¹ that is, not like the Sabellians, who denied the personality of the Son and of the Holy Ghost, by affirming that they were only different appearances of God the Father under different dispensations. For then it would follow that Christ's life upon earth was a phantom; then our daily confession would be unreal; then Christ was *not* the Son of God; He was *not* conceived by the Holy Ghost; He was *not* born of the Virgin Mary; He did *not* suffer under Pontius Pilate; He was *not* crucified, dead, and buried; He did *not* descend into hell; He did *not* rise again the third day from the dead; He did *not* ascend into Heaven; He doth *not* sit at the right hand of God, ever living to make intercession for us. Then is our faith vain, and the Apostles and Evangelists are false witnesses. Then also is there no Holy Trinity; but God the Father, who was reigning in Heaven, was crucified on earth; He was dead and buried. Well might Athanasius declare that the teaching of Sabellius, by making the Father

¹ "Quia unus Deus, nec juxta Sabellianos Patrem Filiumque confundens, nec juxta Arianos Patrem Filiumque secernens."—Ambros. De Fide, ii. 3.

and the Son one God under different names, destroyed both; the Father by making Him the Son, the Son by making Him the Father. (iv. *Contra Arian.* p. 494.)

And as Sabellius impugned the Trinity by exclusively fixing his view on the Unity of the Godhead, thus confounding and blending the three Persons into one, the Arians, by an opposite error, introduced divisions and differences into the Divine essence, asserting that the Divine nature of the Son, though of a like, was of a different and inferior substance to that of the Father. He was not the only-begotten Son (*μονογενής*) except by a species of pre-eminence. He was not "God of God, very God of very God, of one Substance with the Father." And "what they said of the Son," observes Athanasius, "they said with equal blasphemy against the Holy Ghost." (*Ad Serap.* 518.) "How can he," says Athanasius, commenting on the doctrines taught by Arius, "speak the truth concerning the Father who denies the Son, by whom all knowledge of the Father is revealed to us? How shall he think rightly of the Holy Spirit who blasphemes the Word by whom the Spirit is given? Who will believe a man speaking about the Resurrection who denies that Christ was for our sakes made *the first-born from the dead?* (*Colos. i. 18.*) How is it possible that he who is

entirely ignorant of the genuine and true generation of the Son from the Father should not err about His corporeal presence? Even so the Jews, after they had denied the Word, and exclaimed *we will have no king but Cæsar*, were straightway stripped of all things at once; they were left without oil in their lamps, without the sweet smell of myrrh, without the knowledge of prophecy, without the truth itself; and henceforth understanding nothing, they walk in darkness . . .

Who told them (the Arians), after they had abandoned the worship of created things, to worship and serve again a created Being? If they confess that they have heard these things now for the first time . . .

under what head shall we class them, except with St. Paul: *Now the Spirit speaketh expressly, that in the latter times some shall depart from the faith, giving heed to seducing spirits, and doctrines of devils; speaking lies in hypocrisy; having their conscience seared with a hot iron—turning from the truth.*" (1 Tim. iv. 1; Tit. i. 14.)

"We must not think of the Trinity," he says in another place, "as of three Persons (*hypostases*, or self-subsistent beings) divided in themselves, as happens in our natural bodies, lest like the Gentiles we introduce polytheism. The Father is not the Son, nor the Son the Father; for the Father is the Father of the Son;

and the Son is the Son of the Father . . . He is always with the Father, who is in the bosom of the Father, nor ever was the bosom of the Father without the divinity of the Son . . . Being of Being, only God of only God, to him from all eternity the same glory and power (*ἡ ὁμοία δόξα καὶ δύναμις*), were co-begotten from the Father; for he who hath seen the Son hath seen the Father." (Ath. Exp. Fid. I. 80.) And he adds, "what we believe of the Son we likewise believe of the Holy Spirit."¹

To the above passages I subjoin the following: "As the Unity of the Godhead is preserved by not dividing the Father from the Son, so by dividing the Spirit from the Son (the Word) the Unity in Trinity is broken." (Ad Serap. I. 518.) And again: "The Trinity is from everlasting, admitting neither of increase nor of diminution; but is perfect from everlasting; and in this Trinity one God is worshipped," *i.e.*, "We worship one God in Trinity, and Trinity in Unity." (Ad Epict. I. 725.)

5. "For," continues the Creed, "there is one Person of the Father, another of the Son, and another of the Holy Ghost." The Father is not the Son, nor is

¹ "Ex substantia Substantialis est (Filius); ex essentia Essentialis, ac denique vere *Est*, ut qui sit ab Eo qui *Est*; ἐξ ὅντος ὢν." (Athanasius, I. 490).

He the Holy Ghost; nor are the Son and Holy Ghost the Father, though they are one in Substance and in their divine nature One God. The Son and the Holy Spirit are not emanations from the Father, nor three different appearances of the Father at different times, nor parts, nor qualities, nor virtues, nor powers of the Father, nor certain extensions, nor exertions of His divine power and Godhead; but, as the Father is one Person, the Son is another, the Holy Ghost another, distinct, but not divided; three Persons in One God from all eternity to all eternity, admitting of no change, no diminution, no increase.¹

This verse was directed against numerous heresies which had sprung up either shortly before or during the age of Athanasius; against the followers of Secundus, who denied the Personality of the Son, and affirmed He was a phantom only (Philastr. ch. 40); against Heracleon and others, who resolved the Father and the Son into Monads (*ib.* 41), as also did Cerdon (*ib.* 42); against Noetus, who confounded the Personality of the Father with the Son (*ib.* 53), and his follower, Sabellius (*ib.* 54); against Paul, of Samosata, who denied the eternal Personality of the Son (*ib.* 64); against those who

¹ “In their perfect personality (*ὑποστάσει τελειότητος*) the Father is perfect, the Son perfect, the Holy Ghost perfect” (*i. e.* in and of themselves).—Epiph. Anc. § 7.

denied the Personality of the Trinity, and asserted that God was *triformis* (*ib.* 93); against those who said the Son was an effluence, or part of the Father (Ath. I. 79, 171); against those who asserted that the Word was *non-subsistens*, without any distinct subsistence; in other words, a quality or part of the Godhead, not a person (Ath. iv. c. Arian. I. 490.)¹

6. But, though thus distinct in person, "the Godhead (*divinitas*) of the Father, of the Son, and of the Holy Ghost is all one (*una*), and undivided, the glory equal, the majesty co-eternal." This verse, of course, would meet the errors of the heretics mentioned just above, especially of those, like the Semi-Arians, who denied the divinity of the Holy Ghost (Phil. c. 67); and of the Eunomians, who, like some in our days, denied the equality of the Three Persons. (*Ib.* 68.) The language of Athanasius is precise on this point, and in strict accordance with the Athanasian and the

¹ This is clearly put by Philastrius (c. 93), and the connexion of this with the next verses is shown. "Ergo est vera Persona Patris quæ misit Filium, et est vera Persona Filii, quæ advenit de Patre, et est vera Persona Spiritus, quæ a Patre et Filio missa est. Trium itaque harum personarum una est veritas, majestas, et substantiæ æqualitas, et divinitas sempiterna. Qualis est enim immensa et inenarranda Patris Persona, talis est et Filii, talis est Sancti Spiritus." I must again remind my readers that Philastrius, like Athanasius, died before the close of the fourth century.

Nicene Creeds:—"Who with the Father and the Son is magnified and glorified:" *ἰσότιμον καὶ ἰσόδοξον* (says Ath. I. 79): impossible, if there were any inequality between the Three Persons. "There is one eternal Godhead in the Trinity, and one glory of the Holy Trinity." (Ath. i. c. Arian. I. 333.) And again: "For exactly as the Son, who is confessed to be of the same substance (*ὁμοούσιος*) with the Father, is confessed to be Perfect, with Him that is Perfect, so also is the Holy Ghost; for the Three Persons are consubstantial." (Contra Apol. p. 741.)¹

7. The seventh verse is a continuation of the former: "Such as the Father is, such is the Son, and such is the Holy Ghost:" in contradiction to the Arians, who asserted that the Son differed altogether from the Father and the Holy Spirit (Ath. I. 323); against the Apollinarians, who denied the consubstantiality of the Holy Spirit; against the Tropici, who asserted that the Holy Ghost was created (Ath. ad Serap. I. 544). Against all these forms of error Athanasius argues at great length, urging against the former the decisions of the Nicene Fathers, who affirmed, says

¹ Compare St. Ambrose: "In Patre et Filio nulla distantia divinitatis, sed una majestas."—Ambr. De Fide, ii. 8; written A.D. 377 cir. "Patris et Filii Spiritusque Sancti una divinitas."—*Ib.* 10.

Athanasius, that the Son “was the true and very image of the Father, like to the Father in all respects, without any variety” (ὁμοίόν τε καὶ ἀπαράλλακτον, κατὰ πάντα, τῷ πατρὶ). (Ath. I. 177.) And again, in the exact words of the Creed: “Such as the Father is, such is the Son; such as the Father of the Word is, such is the Word itself.”¹ Against the latter he urged: “Our Lord Jesus Christ Himself taught us the perfection (τελειότητα) of the Holy Trinity, its One and undivided Godhead. . . . True worshippers then will worship the Father in Spirit and in truth; confessing the Son, and in Him confessing the Spirit; for the Spirit is inseparable from the Son, as the Son is inseparable from the Father.” (Ad Serap. I. 545.) And again: “As there is one baptism which is given to us in the Father, Son, and Holy Spirit, and one faith in the Trinity, as the Apostle says, so the Holy Trinity is united and indivisible, and has nothing in it that is created.” (*Ib.* 542.)

8. And this brings us to the next verse: The “Father uncreate, the Son uncreate, and the Holy Ghost uncreate.”² However important it may appear to us

¹ ὁποῖος ἂν ᾖ ὁ γεννῶν, τοιοῦτον ἀνάγκη καὶ τὸ γέννημα εἶναι, &c. cii. Contr. Arian. p. 397).

² “Increatus Pater increatus et Filius; quia non minor Pater

for the Creed to insist upon the Son and Holy Ghost being uncreated, it might be thought superfluous, or a mere love of logical uniformity, to insist upon the Father being uncreate; and this notion is found in the minds of many who regard this and other expressions of the Creed as unnecessary. But the readers of Athanasius are well aware that one of the strongest arguments of that writer against Arius and other heretics is the assertion of the perfect, eternal, uncreated Godhead of the Father, because from thence he inferred the absurdity of supposing that a created being, like the Son, as the Arians asserted, could be the Father's image, or that any inferior being, whether Son or Holy Ghost, could be associated with Him in the Holy, Undivided Trinity. Hence the perfect equality of Father, Son, and Holy Ghost is perpetually repeated and insisted on in the Creed. I have said so much to show the determined opposition offered by Athanasius to those who held that the Holy Ghost was created, that it is hardly needful for me to repeat his oft-reiterated expression: "all things were created by the Son, but Himself is not of the number of created things;"¹

non minor Filius; quia Omnipotens Pater, Omnipotens Filius."—Ambrosius, De Incarn. cap. x.; written 382 circ.

¹ τὰ πάντα διὰ τοῦ υἱοῦ ἐκτίθησαν, ἀλλ' οὐκ ἔστιν αὐτὸς κτίσμα. (Expos. Fid. I. 80.)

and so I pass without further comment to the next verse.

9. "The Father incomprehensible (*immensus*), the Son incomprehensible, and the Holy Ghost incomprehensible." This follows from the preceding verse, and is intended to show not only the perfect equality of the three Persons in the Trinity, but to protest against the Arians, who denied it. If all these Persons are alike "incomprehensible," they are alike uncreated; if any one be created, whether the Son or the Holy Ghost, he is not incomprehensible, but comprehended. As the Father fills all space, is everywhere, is bounded by none, for otherwise He would be comprehended, and there would be that which is greater than He, so the Son and the Holy Ghost in like manner are incomprehensible, and fill all things and are everywhere present. And this follows from the first assertion that the Godhead of Father, Son, and Holy Ghost is never divided.¹ Various heretics devised various means for impugning this truth, against which they stumbled, as they did against the consequences which

¹ ὁ μὲν μονογενὴς υἱὸς ἀκατάληπτος, τὸ δὲ πνεῦμα ἀκατάληπτον ἐκ Θεοῦ δέ.—Epiph. I. 900. And a little further on: "The Father uncreated, not made, incomprehensible. The Son begotten, but not created, and incomprehensible. The Holy Spirit not begotten, not created . . . but of the same substance with the Father and the Son."—*Ib.* 901.

follow from it. Some, acknowledging that the Son was God in a certain sense, assumed that His Godhead was inferior to that of the Father, because it was comprehended by His human flesh.¹ Others said that the Son was comprehended by the Father, and could not comprehend Himself or the Father.² Moreover, admitting that the term God may sometimes in Scripture be applied to man, yet in the sense of "the Incomprehensible God," in which sense we understand the Godhead of the Son and of the Holy Ghost, it is absurd to think that it is so used. "Men," says Athanasius, "cannot exist of themselves, but are bounded by place, and subsist in the Word of God ; but He who is the true God comprehends all things, and is comprehended by none. He is in all things by his goodness and power, and external to all things by virtue of His own nature (substance). (De Dec. N. S. I. 171.) And again : "Wherever Scripture uses the word *God*, there we understand that nothing else is signified than His incomprehensible substance (*ἀκατάληπτον οὐσίαν*)"

¹ "The light shineth in darkness, and the darkness comprehended it not."

² "The Son is not immutable like the Father, but mutable in His nature, like created things, and He is wanting in the comprehension of the perfect knowledge of His Father" (*εἰς κατάληψιν τοῦ γινῶναι τελείως τὸν πατέρα*).—Arius' *Thalia*, quoted by Athanasius (i. C. Arian. I. 326).

ib. 179. Against the Arian errors Athanasius argues that, as the Son is the perfect image of the Father, He must be in all things equal to and like the Father. If, then, the Father is immutable, the Son is immutable; if the Father is incomprehensible, the Son is incomprehensible. "For," he says, "if the Son is not like the Father in His substance, then is He obviously unlike; but that which is unlike can never be the Father's image; and if it be so, then he who has seen the Son has not seen the Father. . . . If the Son is not like the Father in substance, there is then something wanting to the image; it is not the Father's perfect image, or His perfect brightness (*i.e.* not light of His light). How, then, do you read the words, "*in Him dwelleth all the fulness of the Godhead bodily?*" (Colos. ii. 9.) (De Synodis I. 601.) St. Ambrose, who continually borrows the arguments and expressions of Athanasius, says: "Imago et splendor et character dicitur Dei Filius, quia hæc incomprehensibilem et investigabilem paternæ majestatis divinitatem in Filio et expressam similitudinem revelarunt." (De Fide ii. prol.) And again: "Est quædam indistincta distinctæ, incomprehensibilis et inenarrabilis substantia Trinitatis." (*Ib.* iv. 8.)

10. And as the Three Persons are alike in their

incomprehensibility, and fill all space, so they fill all time and all eternity; for "the Father is eternal, the Son eternal, and the Holy Ghost eternal;" "The Son is always with the Father," says Athanasius, "who is in the bosom of the Father; nor was ever the bosom of the Father without the Godhead of the Son." (Exp. Fid. I. 80.) "As in the Father there is eternity and immortality, the everlasting, the uncreated (τὸ μὴ κτίσμα), the same we must also think of the Son." (I. 85.) "As the Father is always, so was He from all eternity, the Father of the Son." (I. 171.) And therefore the *Father* is here called "eternal," not merely One Eternal God; because the Arians, in denying the eternity of the Son, denied, by implication, the eternity of the Father. Whilst Athanasius, on the other hand, insisted strongly on the absurdity of supposing there could be an Eternal Father without there was also an Eternal Son. It is necessary to dwell the more upon this, otherwise this verse will sound superfluous. (See Ath. I. 199.) He quotes in the same place a passage from Dionysius, affirming the co-eternity of the Father and the Son, and adds, that the same language applies to the Holy Spirit. (*Ib.* 200.)¹

¹ "Divino admirandoque mysterio manentem semper accipimus Patrem, semper Filium, semper Spiritum Sanctum; non duos Patres,

11. And yet, continues the Creed, "they are not Three Eternals; but One Eternal (God);" for if three, that would be the same as "dividing the Substance," and setting up three Gods, a return to Polytheism, as the Arians accused Athanasius of doing. Then, also, would there be three Creators, and three Omnipotents.¹ For the same reason, "there are not three incomprehensibles, nor three uncreated; but One uncreated and One incomprehensible. So, likewise, the Father is Almighty, the Son Almighty, and the Holy Ghost Almighty; and yet they are not three Almighties, but One Almighty."² The Creed continues:

15. "So the Father is God, the Son is God, and the Holy Ghost is God;" defending the Catholic Faith against individual heresies;—against the heresy of

non duos Filios, non duos Spiritus . . . Causas non discutimus, sacramenta servamus."—Amb. *De Fide*, iv. 8. Written A.D. 377 circ.

¹ "Sic et de singulis si quærat, utrum Pater Omnipotens sit; respondemus, Omnipotens; si Filius, hoc idem respondemus; si Spiritus Sanctus, nec ipsum negamus Omnipotentem. Nec tamen dicimus tres Omnipotentes, quo modo non dicimus tres deos: sed sicut simul illi tres unus Deus, sic simul illi tres unus Omnipotens est."—Augustin. *Col. c. Max.* § 12.

² "Verus Deus est Pater, verus Deus Filius, verus Spiritus Sanctus."—Epiphanius. *Anc.* § 3. "When we say the Father is God and the Son God, we do not mean two Gods . . . We say the Father is God, the Son is God, and the Holy Ghost is God, not (three) Gods."—*Ib.* § 6.

the Sabellians, who asserted there was One God only in essence and in person, and more than One in name : “*Modo Pater, modo Verbum, modo Spiritus ; atque adeo nomine tenus Filius erit et Spiritus.*” (Ath. iv. c. Arian. I. 504.) Also against the Valentinians and Macedonians, who denied the Godhead of the Holy Ghost (*ib.* pp. 527, 539) ; and specially against the Arians. Against the last it is needless to cite authorities. For the divinity of the Holy Ghost, Athanasius shows, in his letter to Serapion, that the Holy Spirit is of the same substance and Godhead with the Father and the Son. “He, therefore, who divides the Father from the Son, or sinks the Holy Spirit to the rank of created beings, he has neither the Father nor the Son, but is impious, and worse than an unbeliever, and is anything but a Christian ” (I. 542). “So, though the Father and the Son are two (persons), the Unity of the Godhead is undivided and in no wise separable ; and therefore we must say, there is but one ἀρχὴ of the Godhead, not two ; and rightly, therefore, a monarchy.” (Ath. iv. c. Arian. I. 489.) And a little further on : “If any one hearing us say that the Father is one and the Son another, should accuse us of bringing in more Gods than One (for that is what some pretend, and deride us, saying, *you mean two Gods*), we must reply

. . . far from it; but as he who confesses the Father^{*} to be one, and the Son another, confesses there is but One God, so he who believes in one God, believes, though the Father and the Son are two, they are One in the Godhead, inasmuch as the Word is born of the Father and can neither be separated nor divided from the Father." (*Ib.* 494.)

And for the third Person in the Trinity: "The Spirit of God is of the same divinity and substance as God." (*Ath.* I. 703.) "It is impiety to say that the Spirit of God was created or made, seeing all Scripture, Old and New, ranks Him and glorifies Him with the Father and the Son, because He is of the same Godhead, the same power, the same substance." (*Ib.* 700.)

16. "And yet they are not three Gods, but One God;" for more Gods than One, would imply there was no God, and more supreme rulers than one, that there was no ruler. (*Ath.* I. 30.)

17. "So likewise the Father is Lord, the Son Lord, and the Holy Ghost Lord; and yet not three Lords, but One Lord."¹

The Arians held that Christ was Lord, in a different

¹ Against the Eunomians, who refused to admit that the Holy Ghost was either *Dominus*, or *Deus*, and contended that He was in His nature inferior to the other two Persons in the Trinity. (*Basil: contra Eunom.* III. sub init.)

sense from that in which the Father is Lord (see Ath. I. 205, 222, 224); others asserted that Christ was neither God nor Lord. (*Ib.* 726.) Against these Athanasius argues that Christ is “very God of very God,” and Lord, not nuncupatively or by adoption, but by virtue of His divine nature. Hence his repeated expression, *αὐτὸς ὁ φύσει Κύριος Λόγος* (I. 380): “Christ who is by His nature Lord and everlasting King.” (*Ib.* 381.) “The Son of God is from everlasting Lord and God.” (*Ib.* 709.) “The Father, the Son, and the Holy Spirit is the Lord of Sabaoth, for there is one divinity and One God in three persons.” (De Incarn. I. 701.) “So the Holy Spirit is called Dominus Sabaoth, and is by the Seraphim adored with God and with the Son.” (De Trinit. 780.)

19. “For like as we are compelled by the Christian verity”—*i.e.*, the Catholic Faith—“to acknowledge every person by Himself,”—that is, each single person (single but not divided) “to be God and Lord;” that is to say, all the attributes of the Godhead found in one are equally found in the other two (*sc.* their uncreatedness, their incomprehensibility, their eternity, their omnipotence, their Godhead, their dominion)—“for such as the Father is, such is the Son, and such is the Holy Ghost,”—though this be the Christian

verity, Catholic and eternal, like the Trinity of whom that Faith speaks, yet by the same Christian verity we are forbidden to say "there be three Gods or three Lords."

21. From the consideration of the perfect equality and perfect unity of the Three persons in One God—and the one is indispensable to the other—the Creed now proceeds to the consideration of the characteristics of the Three Persons. And here I must again urge upon my reader—what is too much forgotten—that the Creed is not discussing the nature of God, or attempting to explain it—resolutely, in fact, it shuts its eyes and its ears against any such an attempt—but throughout every clause it is setting forth God only as *the Father*—never even turning away from this all-absorbing thought, which lies at the root of all its language, so much as to consider Him, as "Maker of Heaven and Earth." That is, indeed, implied in its repeated declaration of One God;—no other Maker, therefore, of Heaven and Earth; but it is this fixed and undeviating resolution to regard Him as the Father—to measure all its language and every one of its statements, by this predominant consideration, that is not only characteristic of this Creed but is the true key to its interpretation. In this respect it is, in a most

remarkable manner, in unison with Athanasius and the theological teaching of his age. For the chief ground on which he and his contemporaries rested their assertion and belief of the Holy Trinity was the eternal, incomprehensible, uncreated Fatherhood of God Himself;—and their great antagonism to Arius and Sabellius arose from the fact that the teaching of these heretics went to annihilate that belief and destroy all Christian hope. It returned the world to the dissolution and confusion of Pagan times. Christ had come to verify to us in a visible form that Eternal Fatherhood—to make it the central truth of His teaching—to bid all that would believe His words trust that truth implicitly, as the truth that could never fail them and was in itself infallible;—but Arius and Sabellius, and their gregarious imitators and followers, undermined that truth by denying, in one form or another, the eternal divinity and personality of the Son. “No Son,” said Athanasius, “no Father; no Father, no Son.” No notional Sonship, no metaphorical Fatherhood can satisfy our hopes. Hard enough it is for men who have lived in perpetual sin and disobedience to realize the truth that God is their Father; and no proof less than the fact that Christ is the perfect Son and image of the Father from all eternity, the only and

beloved Son, who took our nature upon Him, and was made Man, and was crucified, dead and buried, can fully answer the faltering hopes and faith of sinners. So the Fatherhood and Sonship are necessarily and immutably connected; and he who destroys one destroys both.¹

One word more, before I pass on. If this was the truest, it was also the most charitable ground to take with the Arian. For if he felt its force, he was on the high road to a more perfect faith; if he was, on the other hand, losing his grasp of the Fatherhood of God, the sooner he was rudely shaken out of such unbelief the better. Pantheism, and all the theisms in the world were only adding to the deadliness of his deadly disease. "It would be more agreeable," says Atha-

¹ "God was not always a Father, but afterwards became so. The Son was not always, for He was not before He was born," &c.—Arius' *Thalia*, quoted by Ath. § I. 325. Also the Arians said, that if the Son existed from all eternity with the Father, the orthodox ought to call Him the brother, not the Son (*ib.* 330). The quibble was easily answered; for the same faith which proclaimed the eternity of the Son proclaimed the eternity of the Father, not merely the eternity of God. "If we say the Son is eternal," writes Athanasius, "we confess that He is the Son of the Father. How then can he who is begotten be accounted the brother of him who begets? If our faith is in the Father and the Son, what brotherhood can there be between them?" (*ib.*). These passages show the importance of fixing the strictest attention all through the Creed on the word "Father."

nasius, "to truth and piety to name and signify God by the Son, than by His works alone; . . . for that is, a general name" (abridged). "But the word Father has reference to the Son alone. And there is as much difference, or more, in calling God the Father, from calling Him not-made (uncreated), as there is between His Word and things made (created)." (i. Orat. c. Arian. I. 345.) "The word Father is simple and Scriptural, more congruous with the truth, and points only at the Son." (*Ib.*)

21. "The Father is made of none:"¹—that is, He is self-existent by virtue of His very nature as God; and by virtue of the same He is the Father; not made so, as Arius said, by the birth of Christ. He is neither created, like things visible or invisible, nor begotten—as certain heretics said, in the days of Athanasius—of some prior and superior Existence, in whom the whole Trinity had its origin; nor like the Son in one respect, for He was not sent as God's only begotten into the world.

22. "The Son is of the Father alone;" the "only begotten Son of God"—*μονογενὴς*—"Solus ex Deo

¹ "Pater ingenitus est, increatus et incomprehensibilis. Filius genitus, sed increatus et incomprehensibilis. Spiritus Sanctus semper est, non genitus, non creatus, . . . ex eadem Patris Filiique substantia."—Epiph. An. § 7.

. . . jure ac merito ex substantia Dei Filius" (Ath. I. 179), unlike men, who are sometimes called the Sons of God, but are not His only Son, nor are they of the same substance with the Father. "Not made nor created like the sons of men; but begotten." "Non creatus sed genitus" of His Father's substance—not created out of nothing, like things visible and invisible." (Ath. I. 81.) "If all who are called Sons and called Gods, whether on earth or in Heaven, were made Sons and made Gods by the Word, and yet the Son Himself is the Word, it is manifest that all have been made so by Him, and He is before them all; or, rather, He alone is the true Son, and He alone God of the true and very God;—true God, not as receiving these distinctions in reward for His merits, but being so naturally, according to His Substance; for He is the begotten of his Father's Substance." (i. Orat. c. Arian. I. 350.) "He is not like a man's Son born of a man, subsequent in existence to the Father, but He is 'the begotten' of the Father (*γέννημα*); and as He is the special Son of God, is Himself eternal, as God is eternal." (*Ib.*) "The things that are made, God produced by His Word, at His pleasure, but the Son is from everlasting, the peculiar generation (*ἴδιον γέννημα*) of the Father's Substance." (*Ib.* 342.)

23. "The Holy Ghost is of the Father and of the Son;" not of the Father alone, as the Son is; "neither made, nor created, nor begotten," like the Son, "but proceeding." This allusion to the Procession of the Holy Spirit has sometimes been referred to as indicating a later origin of the Creed than the age of St. Athanasius. Even if the expression had been added at a later date, as in the case of the Nicene Creed, it would supply no argument against the general antiquity of the Creed. But the objection is founded on a mistake, and the language of Athanasius is in stricter accordance with this clause than would be supposed. "The Spirit is given and sent by the Son" (Ath. I. 535). "All that the Father hath are mine; so the Holy Spirit is the Father's, who is also called the Son's" (*ib.* 552). "Throughout the Scriptures you will find that the Holy Spirit, which is said to be of the Son, is also said to be of the Father" (*ib.* Compare also p. 542). "The Holy Spirit which proceedeth (ἐκπόρευμα ὄν) from the Father is always in the hands of the Father and the Son" (Conf. Fid. I. 81). Now it is worth observing that the expression "is of the Father and of the Son," is a close imitation of the words of Athanasius (τοῦ υἱοῦ, τοῦ πατρὸς), and scarcely amounts to the strict terminology by which the Greek heresy was

afterwards met, "proceeding from the Father and the Son." The Athanasian Creed is content to leave the question in the form it assumed in the fourth century, and not as it was afterwards hotly contested. "The Holy Ghost is *of* the Father and *of* the Son" (this no reader of Athanasius would deny), "neither made, nor created, nor begotten, but proceeding;" leaving the manner of that procession undetermined, as it was in his age. So in Gregory of Nyssa, "*Spiritus Sanctus et ex Patre dicitur, et ex Filio esse perhibetur.*" Frag. iii. 1110. (Migne.) And against the Macedonians: "The Holy Spirit receives from the Son, and is sent (by the Son), and is not separated from Him." § 22. So Paulinus of Nola: "*Ab illa ineffabili generatione [S. Joannes] ordiens, co-eternum et consubstantialem, et co-omnipotentem et co-opificem Patri Filium nunciavit, in Spiritu Sancto Deo Deum cernens; quia in ipso Trinitas Divinitatis impletur et una Trinitatis Divinitas cernitur. Spiritus enim Dei, sicut et Verbum Dei, Deus uterque in uno capite permanentes, et ex uno Patris fonte manantes, sed Filius nascendo, Spiritus procedendo.*" (Epist. xxiv. ad Amand. v.).¹

¹ In Epiphanius, again, we have the precise expression of the Creed: Πνεῦμα . . . ἐν μέσῳ πατρὸς καὶ υἱοῦ, ἐκ τοῦ πατρὸς καὶ τοῦ υἱοῦ.—Anc. § 6. Compare Hær. lxxiv., τὸ πνεῦμα αὐτοῦ (sc. θεοῦ) ἐκ τοῦ Χριστοῦ, εἰ παρ' ἀμφοτέρων.—§ 4. τὸ δὲ ἅγιον πνεῦμα παρ' ἀμφοτέρων.—Ib. § 7. See also S. Ambr. De Spiritu I. 11.

24. "So there is one Father, not three Fathers; one Son, not three Sons; one Holy Ghost, not three Holy Ghosts." "Non sunt duo Patres sed unus." (Ath. I. 491). "Certain heretics," observes Athanasius, "foolishly imagine that besides God the Father and Christ, there is another uncreated God, the author of evil and of nature." (Contra Gent. I. 5). "The Father is of no other Father, but the Father is always Father, as the Son is always Son. . . . And as the Father is always Father, and never can be Son, so the Son is always Son, and never can be Father." (i. Contra Arian. I. 336.) And, as he repeats more than once, what is thus said of the Son applies equally to the Holy Ghost. So again: "As the Father has been the Father from everlasting, so the Son has always been the Son. And as the Father can never be a Son, so the Son can never become a Father. And as the Father will never cease to be the only Father, so will the Son never cease to be the only Son. . . . Hence in Scripture the Holy Spirit is never termed a Son, that he may not be considered as a brother, nor the Son of the Son, that the Father should never be considered as a grandfather. But the Son is spoken of as the Son of the Father, and the Spirit as the Spirit of the Father; and thus there is one Godhead of the Holy Trinity, as there is one faith." (Ad Serap. I. 531.)

25. "And in this Trinity none is afore or after other"—not afore or after, because the Holy Trinity is from all eternity without accession and without diminution; before time was and when time shall be no more. "As it always has been so it is now, and as it now is so it has been always and is the Trinity, and in it, the Father, Son, and Holy Spirit." (Ad Serap. I. 556.) "None is afore or after," for "the Son is the Father's image and the Word, and is from everlasting, and never was non-existent, but was always, the eternal brightness of the eternal light. Why, then, will you dream of times before the Son; or why do you blaspheme the Word by whom the ages came into existence as being after in time? How could there be time or ages when the Word (as you Arians say) had not yet appeared, *by whom all things were made, and without whom was not anything made that was made?* Or, when talking of time, do you not say openly that there was a time when the Word was not?" (i. Con. Arian. I. 330.) "The Father's substance and nature was never at any time imperfect, so that some speciality (*ἰδιον*) should happen to it afterwards, nor was the Son begotten as man is, that he should be posterior to his Father's existence; but as He is the special and peculiar Son of the eternal God, He is Himself

eternal.”¹ (*ib.* 330). Again: “Filius talis est qualis Pater. . . . talis imago esse debet qualis est ejus Pater.” . . . “In these alone (as contradistinguished from men) is this established, that as the Father is from everlasting Father, so the Son is Son from everlasting.” (*ib.* 334-336). “It is clear that the Holy Spirit is superior to all created things, and is One with the Godhead of the Father.” (Ad Serap. I. 528.) “As the Son is inseparable from the Father, so the Spirit is inseparable from the Son.” (Ad Serap. I. 545.) And in reference to the latter part of the verse, which affirms that “none is greater or less than another,” besides the general argument perpetually insisted upon by Athanasius, of *One* God in Trinity, one in whom there can be no diversity and no inequality, we meet with the following unequivocal statements. “The beasts before the throne, by their triple repetition of *Holy, Holy, Holy*, denote three perfect *hypostases* or persons; as by the single word *Lord* they denote one substance. He therefore who makes

¹ Compare St. Ambrose: “Si Patre posterior est, recens est; et si unius non est divinitatis alienus est. Sed nec posterior, quia recens non est; nec alienus, quia ex Patre natus.”—De Fide, i. 9.

And Gregory of Nyssa: “Neither the Father nor the Son existed prior to the Holy Spirit; but as soon as the Father and immediately with the Father was God the Word, and simultaneously as the Father with the Son so also was the Spirit with the Son and with the Father.”—Contra Apoll.

the Son of God less than God blasphemes against God." (Ath. I. 86.) "Whenever you wish to think of the Son (*υοειν*), learn what those perfections are which exist in the Father, and believe the same are in the Son . . . for what is in the Father the same is in the Son." (Ib. 85.) "Since the Son is the Word of the Father, He is equal with the Father. For He says, *I and my Father are one*; . . . equal, that is, in His substance and nature;" being of the same substance with the Father, "begotten of his Father's substance." (De Inc. I. 698.) "It is true that the Father and the Son are two, for the Father is the Father and is not the Son, and the Son is the Son and not the Father. But their nature is one and the same; for He that is begotten is like Him that begets; for He is His image; and all that the Father hath is the Son's. Hence the Son is not another God . . . but He and the Father are one, in the property of their nature, and in the identity of one and the same Godhead." (Contra Arian. I. 438.) And of the Holy Spirit: "It is impious to say that the Spirit of God was created or made, for all Scripture, old and new, ranks Him and glorifies Him with the Father and the Son, because He is of the same Godhead, the same power, and the same substance" (De Inc. I. 700). And briefly, "There is one eternal Godhead

in the Trinity and one glory of the Holy Trinity." (Contr. Arian. I. 333.)

26. The conclusion, then, is inevitable; as "in this Trinity none is afore or after other, none is greater or less than another;" and it follows that "the whole three Persons are coeternal together and coequal." The Creed then sums up this division of its subject by repeating the declaration with which it had started;

27. "So that in all things," and "before all things," in whatever way the Christian regards the Holy Trinity, whether from the Person of the Father, or of the Son, or of the Holy Ghost; this is the subject of his adoration. Whether he fixes his mind on the greatness of God in creation, or the goodness of God in the work of redemption, or the presence of God in his sanctification;—whether he feels that it is to God he owes soul and body, health, strength and reason, the comforts of this life, the hopes of that which is to come;—whether he considers that this "pillared firmament," with its sun, its stars, its fruits and its flowers, its lights above, its waters below, minister to his utility and delight—it is from this Trinity that worketh all things from the beginning that all proceed. It is to Him who divided the light from the darkness by His Holy Spirit, and is still the only source of light and order, that man is in-

debted for all; whether he has a family and a country to love and cherish, peace, security, and an equable government—to Him who sustains and governs all things, One God in Trinity—Father, Son, and Holy Spirit.

Or whether, again, he is set in the midst of “many and great dangers” of body or of mind, distressed by fightings within and fears without; in this Trinity he is enabled to recognize a Father in Heaven, who preserves him from evil, who as a Father, and out of His fatherly affection to us as a Father, is omniscient to see, omnipotent to protect, unchangeable, eternal, incorporate with us by the flesh of His Son, dwelling in us with His Holy Spirit; one, therefore, who is to be thanked and praised for ever; beyond, and above and in all things, Father, Son, and Holy Spirit, alike omnipotent, eternal, immutable, and incomprehensible, but comprehending all things.

28. And lastly, in all things and above all things are we to worship this Trinity and meditate upon it, to stir our affections, to make us humble, to give us courage and confidence, to fire our gratitude; placing it before us in all trials and temptations, whatever may befall us. For this is the anchor of our Christian hope. “He therefore that *will* be saved,” not merely in the sense of escaping everlasting death hereafter;

not as one content to continue in sin if only he can avoid its penalty, to walk in the ways of ignorance, darkness, and death here, provided only he may escape the judgment of God hereafter, as he thinks; who has some feeling of his lost condition, desires emancipation, and looking into his own heart, knows and is assured that if left to himself he not only shall, but is perishing, and must perish everlastingly; he that will be saved from sin and its eternal consequences, here and hereafter, "must thus think of the Trinity."

§.

Having thus explained what is the Catholic and Christian Faith in reference to the whole Trinity, the Creed now proceeds to insist on the necessity of a right faith in regard to the Incarnation of the Second Person. For round this as a nucleus not only did all the errors of the fourth century gather, until towards the close of it the Pneumatomachi had eclipsed it in their perverse denial of the divinity of the Holy Ghost, but Arianism, as it was more formidable than any other heresy, gave birth and occasion to the rest.

29. "Furthermore it is necessary to everlasting salvation that he also believe rightly the Incarnation of our Lord Jesus Christ." That is necessary as a part

of the Catholic faith—a part yet involving the whole—which every one must “keep whole and undefiled.”

30. “For the right faith is that we believe and confess”—and both are necessary—“that our Lord Jesus Christ, the Son of God, is God and Man.” To bring proofs from Athanasius of his concurrence in this statement would be little else than to transcribe his writings. But in confirmation of the necessity of this faith one passage shall suffice. “How can they who are called Christians venture to question whether the Lord who was born of Mary was the Son of God in His substance and in His nature, according to the flesh being of the seed of David and of the flesh of Holy Mary? Who are they who are so bold as to say that Christ who suffered in the flesh and was crucified, is not the Lord, and Saviour, and God and Son of the Father? Or how can they call themselves Christians who say that the *Λόγος* descended upon a holy man, as upon one of the prophets; and was not made very man and took flesh of Mary?” (Ad Epict. I. 721.)

31. “God of the Substance,” nature and Godhead, “of the Father, begotten before the worlds”—before all time—“and man of the Substance” and nature “of His mother, born in the world,”—born in time; sent forth, made of a woman, in the fulness of time. “Ver-

bum ex Patris substantia genitum.” (De Decret. I. 166.) “Nec enim unquam non fuit, sed fuit semper Verbum, quod et ab æternitate apud Patrem extitit.” (De Decret. 177.) “Sin autem solus ex Deo est, tamquam verus Filius, uti revera est, jure ac merito ex substantia Dei Filius dicendus est.” (*Ib.* 179.) “Many have become imitators of Paul, as he was of Christ. But not one of them was the Word, or the Wisdom, or the only-begotten Son, or the Image; nor did any of these dare to say: *I and the Father are One*; or, *I in the Father and the Father in Me*; but of all these it is said: *Among the gods there is none like unto Thee O Lord.* (Psa. lxxxvi. 8.) *What is he among the gods that shall be like unto the Lord.* (Psa. lxxxix. 7.) But He alone is called the true and natural image of the Father. For although we are said to be made in God’s image, and are called the image and glory of God, we have not obtained this title, as of ourselves, but because the true image and glory of God dwelleth in us, that is to say, His Word, which for our sakes became flesh.” (iii. Cont. Arian. I. 443.)

Besides the Arians, this doctrine was contradicted by the Valentinians, who denied that Christ took flesh of the Virgin Mary, and affirmed that He brought with Him a spiritual body from Heaven. (Philast.

ch. 38.) Also by the followers of Cerdo and Marcion, who denied the reality of Christ's humanity and passion, resolving His appearance into a phantasm. (*Ib.* 44 and 45.) Further, Marcion insisted that the Divine nature was incapable of the human. (Ath. c. Apol. I. 748.) Lastly, the Apollinarians denied this clause of the Creed, by asserting that the Word did not take flesh of the Virgin, but formed a body of the same substance as itself, out of its own substance.

32. Therefore to confess that the Son was God and Man, was not deemed sufficiently explicit, as both were acknowledged, in a certain sense, by those who denied the sense in which those expressions were held by the Catholic Church. For this cause the next two verses were added to prevent any misconception as to the exact meaning of the Creed. Christ is not only "God of the Substance of His Father," not God, in the sense in which that word is sometimes applied to men, not God, as being part only of God's essence, or for His pre-eminence over all creatures, or because in His holy consent and will He is one with the Father—"but perfect God," as needing nothing of all those attributes and perfections which belong to the Godhead of the Father. And in the same expansive sense is He "perfect man," taking our flesh upon Him as

perfectly and as fully as that flesh existed in the Virgin Mary His Mother, or in any of the children of Adam. And not only our flesh but our soul, which is an essential constituent of our humanity, with its reason, passions, and affections ; for a perfect man must consist of soul and body.¹ Contrary to the opinions of those who maintained that Christ took flesh but not a human soul, because the Word was in place of a soul. Contrary to the opinions of those also, who, though they admitted that He took flesh, asserted that that flesh was non-subsistent (*ἀνυπόστατον*), like the Apollinarians (Ath. I. 760), or phantastic, like the earlier heretics. But Christ is *perfect* God and *perfect* man, of a rational soul, and real human flesh. “Sicque

¹ “Dei enim simplex natura est ; homo ex anima rationali constat et corpore. Si alterum tollas totam naturam hominis sustulisti.” (Ambros. De Incarn. ii. § 11). “Cum suscepit carnem hominis consequens est ut perfectionem incarnationis plenitudinemque suscepit, nihil enim in Christo imperfectum. Suscepit itaque carnem ut resuscitaret ; assumsit animam, sed animam perfectam, rationabilem, humanam, assumsit atque suscepit.” (*ib.* vii. § 65). “For God, the Son, took not the Word in place of a reasonable soul in the flesh, but He took a reasonable soul, capable of thought, strictly human, of the same substance as ours is, and a flesh of the same substance as ours, and was ‘perfect man,’ yet without spot of sin, because He did no sin, but was made sin for us, that we might be made the righteousness of God in Him. Therefore His flesh and His soul are precisely of the same substance as our flesh and our soul.” (*ib.* § 76). Slightly abridged.

dicendus fuerit Christus perfectus Deus et perfectus homo, non quod divina perfectio in humanam perfectionem mutata sit, quod impium est dicere, nec etiam quod duæ perfectiones a se invicem divisæ dicantur, quod a pietate alienum est . . . sed ratione inefficientis existentiae”—*i.e.*, by reason of an unfailing existence, a real subsistence. And again: “Whatever He by His own will ordained in nature He took upon Himself, according to the measure of His will; that is, His birth of a woman, increase of stature, numbering of years, labour, and hunger, and thirst, and sleep, and pain, and death, and resurrection. And for this reason where the body of man was destroyed there Jesus advances His own body, and where the human soul was conquered by death there Christ shows His own human soul, that He may be there, as man, unconquerable by death, and break the empire of death, as God.” (*Ib.* 747.) “All the properties of the flesh are attributed to Him, because He was in the flesh; so he is said to hunger, to thirst, to suffer, to labour, and the like, to all that the flesh is liable. But the peculiar works of the Word itself, as, to raise the dead, to give sight to the blind, to heal the issue of blood; these He performed by means of His body. And the Word bore the infirmities of the flesh, as its own, because it was

His flesh; and the flesh subserved the works of His divinity, because He was made (*ἐγένετο*) in it, for it was the body of God." (iii. Orat. C. Arian. I. 460.) And again: "Corpus pro corpore, et animam pro anima dedit, ac perfectam subsistentiam (*i.e.*, 'the reasonable soul and human flesh subsisting') pro toto homine." (Ath. I. 747.)

This vital truth, as we learn from Athanasius himself, was impugned in various ways and from various quarters. The Marcionites asserted that God abode in the Virgin (*ἐπιδημήσαντα*), but had not contact with human flesh, which is subject to sin and the Prince of this world. (Ath. I. 751.) The Valentinians affirmed that the flesh became part of the Godhead and the whole Trinity was crucified. Arius confessed the humanity and denied the divinity, asserting that in place of the interior man (the reasonable soul) the Word was in the flesh. (Ath. I. 752 and 761.) Paul of Samosata maintained that Christ was God in a certain sense, and the Word by which He was inspired was divine; but he added that the Word was a divine effluence, and its first manifestation was at Nazareth. Some heretics affirmed that Christ assumed a human body and human soul, but not a rational soul, not the rational faculty (*νοῦς*). (Epiph. Hær. i. p. 1016.) The Apollinarians

denied that Christ took a real soul; Saturninus, that He took either a real body or a real soul. (Phil. ch. 31; Ath. I. 761.) Against all these errors enough has been quoted already from the works of Athanasius to supersede the necessity of further remarks. Against those who denied the human soul in Christ's incarnation one or two brief passages shall suffice. "We have learnt that the second Adam had soul and body, and all that constituted the first Adam." (Con. Apol. I. 756.) "In the soul of Christ was the empire of death destroyed . . . in the body of Christ was corruption done away, and incorruption was displayed in the grave." (*Ib.* 759.) "They treated the Word with ignominy when they nailed the body of the Word to the Cross. It was God who was thus set at naught, and the suffering, and death and resurrection, were of the flesh and of the soul of God." (*Ib.* 760.) "It is written: *Jesus groaned in the spirit and was troubled.* (John xi. 33.) This is not the act of flesh without *voûs*, or of a Godhead that is immutable; but of a soul that has intelligence (*νοήσις*) and is troubled." (*Ib.* p. 746.)

33. "Equal to the Father as touching His Godhead; and inferior to the Father as touching His manhood."¹

¹ "Æqualis in Dei forma, minor in susceptione carnis." (Amb. De Fide, ii. § 70). "Proinde Christus Jesus, Dei Filius est, et Deus,

The first half of the verse was denied by the Arians, by the followers of Marcion (Philast. ch. 45), and of Apelles (*ib.* ch. 47), as it is by certain divines of our own days, who object to this and other passages of the Athanasian Creed, as insisting upon the perfect equality of the Father and the Son, and contradicting, as they imagine, the Nicene Creed and the filial subordination asserted by Bishop Bull. I am not now concerned with examining how far the Athanasian Creed corresponds with the Nicene Creed, or with the standard of Bishop Bull's theology. Certainly no careful reader of the works of that great author can, for a moment, suppose that he maintained that the two Creeds were at variance on the cardinal doctrine of the equality of the Father and the Son, or that he ever dreamed that the subordination, for which he was contending, would have been urged against the Athanasian Creed, or taken as a proof that it was in error for insisting upon the perfect equality of the First and Second Persons in the Trinity. Thus in defending Eusebius, Bull remarks: "Ait (*i.e.* Eusebius) eo sig-

et homo. Deus ante omnia sæcula, homo in nostro sæculo . . . In quantum Jesus est ipse et Pater unum sunt, in quantum autem homo est Pater major est illo." (St. August. Ench. ch. xxxv.); and below: "Propter Verbum æqualis Patri, propter hominem minor. Unus Dei Filius, idemque hominis Filius; non duo Filii," &c.

nificari sacrosanctam Trinitatem, Patrem nempe, Filium et Spiritum Sanctum, *quorum natura æqualis sit, et pariter increata, ortusque omnis expers.*" And he adds: "Quid, quæso, contra Arium cæterosque Anti-Trinitarios his efficacius, aut disertius, ab ullo Catholicorum unquam dictum fuit?" (Def. F. N. p. 231.) Again, he quotes, with approbation, Damascenus, saying: "The Son is the image of the invisible God, *qui in se ipso Patrem gerit, et in omnibus idem cum illo est.*" (Ib. 253.) And again: "Whoever acknowledges (with the Nicene Creed) that the Son is 'of the same substance with the Father,' must, by necessary consequence, admit that the Son is in His nature (*κατὰ φύσιν*) equal with the Father;" (i.e. "equal to the Father as touching His Godhead.") "For," continues the bishop, "how can any one believe that the same divine nature is common to the Father and the Son, and yet imagine that the Son is wanting in any essential property of the Godhead, and therefore is inferior to the Father?" (Ib. 259.) And he concludes, "All men are by nature alike and equal (*pares et æquales*), and differ only in accidents, which cannot have place in the divine nature. *Nay, no substance* (essence) *admits of more or less*; and where more or less cannot be, there also can be no dispute or com-

parison of similitude or dissimilitude, of greater or less perfection." (*Ib.*) The Athanasian Creed needs no better defender of its orthodoxy than Bishop Bull, and it is abundantly clear, that in his assertion of a subordination in the Trinity he never meant to imply any inequality in the Godhead. He maintained the statement of the Creed again and again, that "The whole Three Persons are coeternal together and coequal."

We admit a divine and mysterious order in the Blessed Trinity—an order of which as there is no beginning so there shall be no end;—an order existing before all time, and therefore one in which there can be no priority or sequence or succession, as we understand these words. We admit that the Father is the Father of all; that He is rightly called the first Person in the Trinity, and the Son the second, and the Holy Ghost the third. But where in the world does the Athanasian Creed deny this? Where does it fail to assert it? But to return.

Both clauses of the verse are maintained by Athanasius—and by no Father, in any century, with more firmness or more earnestness. And as the two centres, round which the Creed revolves—which my readers must again and again fasten in their minds like *clavi trabales*, for against them all erroneous doctrine, foul

or fine, coarse or subtle, is ever raging, consciously or unconsciously—as these two centres are, in the first half of the Creed—the Three PERSONS in one God;¹ so, in the second half, no truth is more continually insisted on by Athanasius than this, in the verse we are now considering.

“Equal to the Father as touching His Godhead.” “Whatever the Scripture says, *sc.* ‘that the Son received,’ and ‘the Son was glorified,’ it says in reference to Christ’s humanity, and not in reference to His Godhead. And when He says, ‘*My Father who sent Me is greater than I*’ (John xiv. 28), He means that, inasmuch as He was made man, His Father is greater than He is. Since as He is the Word of the Father *He is equal* with the Father. For He says: *I and the Father are One* (John x. 30); and, *He who hath seen Me hath seen the Father* (John xiv. 9); and, *He thought it not robbery*

¹ Even men intending to be very orthodox continually lose sight of this. The “divine alterity” of Coleridge, the “thesis and anti-thesis,” and other metaphysical terms by which he represented the truth of the Trinity, are as deficient in soundness, as they are in clearness and philosophical profundity, to the language of the Athanasian Creed. How far the assertion of Three *Persons* and one God was lost sight of, and would have been almost effaced, thirty years and more ago, in the authorized theological teaching of the University of Oxford, but for the energetic protest of those, who have since been most unjustly condemned for the services they then rendered to the faith, I shall not at this time discuss.

to be equal with the Father ; equal that is in His nature, and of the same substance with the Father." (Ath. De Inc. I. 698.) And again : " Grace is more *excellent* than the law, and truth than the shadow. But that which is more *excellent*, as is said, could not come to pass except by the Son, who sitteth at the right hand of the Father. What does that signify, except the genuineness (τὸ γνήσιον) of the Son, and that the Godhead of the Father and the Son is the same ?" (i. Orat. c. Ar. I. 367.) And for the latter clause, besides the passages already quoted, we find Athanasius citing with approbation the words of Dionysius : " Whatever words (in Scripture) speak of the Son as differing from the Father are to be understood as appertaining to the flesh which He bore for our sakes." (I. 206.) This is too obvious to require further comment.¹

34. But the doctrine of the perfect Godhead and perfect manhood in Christ was liable to misrepresentation by the perverse. For, said some, these two

¹ Compare the language of St. Ambrose : " Quomodo potest (Christus) minor esse Deus, cum Deus perfectus et plenus sit ? Sed minor in natura hominis." (De Fide, ii. § 61). " Æqualis in Dei forma, minor in susceptione carnis et hominis passione." (*ib.* § 70). " Non est ergo secundum divinitatem minor qui plenitudinem habet divinitatis et gloriæ. Major enim et minor in iis quæ corporalia sunt distinguuntur solent . . . Vacant ista ubi de divinis tractatus inducitur." (*ib.* § 65). See also St. Basil De Spir. § vi. and viii.

natures imply two persons, a human and a divine ; and thus they overthrew at once the doctrine of the Trinity. Some, as the Cerinthians, the Ebionites, and Marcus, divided Jesus from the Christ. (Philast. c. 36, 37, 42.) Some, like the Samosatenes, asserted that the illumination ("Light of Light") of the Son was one with the Father, but that the Son Himself was not of the same substance with the Father. (Ath. I. 180.) Some said there were two Sons ; one born from all eternity, the other in time (Synod. sub Damaso, A.D. 379) ; some that there were two Sons ; the one by nature, the other by adoption. (Greg. Nys. c. Apoll.) Against all these and other forms of error springing from the same root the Creed guards the believer in the next verse : "Who although He be God and man yet He is not two, but one Christ." Is not two, as these errors would have made Him, but one ;—one Christ ;—Christ altogether one—in perfect Godhead and perfect manhood ; of the same substance with the Father in His divine nature, of the same substance with man in His human nature ;—Son of God and Son of Man—never to be separated or divided—never to be regarded, worshipped, or thought upon, as merely God or merely Man, but as one Christ, God and Man.

"They err who say that there was one Son who

suffered, and another that suffered not. For it was no other than the Word itself that submitted to death and suffering. But that impassible and incorporeal Word submitted to the birth of human flesh, and fulfilled all things that it might have wherewith to make an offering for us; . . . and that flesh became in its own nature appropriated to God (the proper flesh of God), though it was not of the same substance with the divinity of the Word, and in a sense (ὥς) co-eternal with it; appropriated in its own nature, and indivisible from Him by reason of its union, being of the Seed of David, of Abraham, and of Adam, from whom we all are descended. . . . The Word was made flesh, not that the Word should cease to be the Word; but it became flesh that the Word might be in the flesh, that the Word might always remain the Word, and the Word bear flesh; that in the flesh it might endure suffering and death in human form, and descend to the grave and Hell; in which also it accomplished the resurrection from the dead; and God the Word made a show openly of flesh, of blood, of soul, by means of His inseparable flesh, as it is written, of the Seed of David. . . . Therefore also Christ is called Man, and Christ is called God, and Christ is God and Man, and is one Christ (or, Christ is one): 'Deus et homo est

Christus et unus est Christus' (εἰς ἔστιν ὁ Χριστός)."
(Ath. c. Apol. I. 744-5.)¹

35. But "One," as Athanasius has just said, "not by conversion of the Godhead into flesh; but by taking the manhood into God." Not One, as the Tropitæ held, who thought that the Word was converted into flesh. (Philast. c. 70.) Not, as Eutyches afterwards held, that the human was absorbed and swallowed up in the divine nature; not, as others, that the Word descended upon Christ, as on the Prophets of old, but was not made man (Ath. I. 459), nor as others, again, that the Word was converted into flesh (Ath. I. 723).² Not One, then, "by conversion of the Godhead into flesh, but by taking of the manhood into God; One altogether," not by confusion, or blending, or conversion of one substance into another—the divinity into the humanity, or the human into the divine—but in the exact and strict preservation of both—the Godhead and the manhood, in all their fulness and perfection, inseparably

¹ "Ut unum Dominum Jesum, non duos crederes."—Amb. De Inc. vi. § 47.

² See St. Ambrose, De Inc. vi. § 49. And below: "Non est Verbi natura in carnis conversa naturam." (§ 56). "Miraris quia scriptum est: *Verbum caro factum est*, cum caro adsumta sit a Dei Verbo." (§ 60). And Paulinus: "Non ita caro factus ut a sua natura migraret in nostram, sed ut remanens quod erat, propter nos nciperet esse quod non erat." (Epist. xxiv.)

united in Christ as one and the same Person—the second Person of the blessed Trinity—Very God and Very Man. “For the Son of God was not shut up in the body, nor was He so confined to the body as to be nowhere else, nor did He so exclusively move the body that the universe was deprived of His power and His providence; but what was above all things marvellous, remaining still the Word, He was not contained by any thing, but of Himself contained all things. . . So whilst He was in the body, and giving it life of Himself, He also gave life to all things, and was in all things, and was out (ἐξω) of all things; and being known by His works done in the body, He was yet not hidden in His power through the universe. It is the property of the soul of man to contemplate things external to its own body, but not to energize out of the body, or move things, by its presence, that are beyond the reach of the body. No man by any amount of thought can move or transfer things far removed from him; nor if he should sit at home, and meditate upon the heavenly bodies, will the sun move or the heaven revolve in obedience to his thoughts . . . but such is not the Word of God in Man. For He was not tied to the body, but, rather, Himself contained it, so that He was in it, and in all things, and yet out of all things,

and rested in the Father alone. And so, marvel of all marvels, as a man He lived, and as the Word gave life to all things, and as the Son He was with the Father." (Ath. De Inc. I. 49.) Again: "This is the scope and character of Holy Scripture, as I have often said, the declaration of a twofold (nature) in Christ, viz., that He is the eternal Son of God, the Word, the reflex and wisdom of the Father, and that afterwards He took flesh for our sakes of the Virgin." (*Ib.* iii. c. Arian. I. 459.) "The Word was made flesh, not because it was changed into flesh, but by taking the living flesh (into itself), and was made man." (Ath. I. 724.)¹

37. "For, as the reasonable soul and flesh is one man, so God and Man is one Christ," which is added, not by way of analogy, but illustration.² The illustration

¹ In a passage of Athanasius, preserved by Euthymius Zigabenus, we have the following: "There is a twofold nature in Christ, but a single person." (Ath. I. 1012). On this, however, I do not insist; as some think it is dubious. The doubt seems to me chimerical; the more so because it is not unexampled in the writers of the fourth century, as in St. Ambrose, who mainly adopted the arguments of St. Athanasius. "The Catholic and Apostolic Church anathematizes those who say that Christ was a mere man . . . or that God the Word took an inanimate body, or was a man without a reasonable soul, or who by counfounding the two natures reduce them to one, or who refuse to admit that there are two natures in Christ, and one Person, even as there is one Christ and one Son." Quoted by Theodoret, at the end of the treatise, *De Incarnatione*.

² This expression became famous in the Church: "Ut quemad-

is found in Athanasius: "Quemadmodum, inquiunt, homo ex duobus consistens, una dicitur natura, sic etiam Dominum Christum ex Verbo et carne existentem unam esse constat essentiam." And a little below: "Si nihil prohibet quominus hominis natura duas habeat partes ex quibus una consurgit persona, homo nimirum . . . quanto magis divina gratia valet efficere ut duæ naturæ perfectæ in conjunctionem minime confusam concurrant, nec tamen una singularis tollatur persona?" (Ath. I. 1014, from an extract preserved by Zigenus). So elsewhere: "Our salvation was not of the body alone, but of the whole man; that is, of the soul and body." (Ath. ad Epict. I. 724): "Homo dicitur Christus, Deus quoque dicitur Christus, ac Deus et homo est Christus, et unus est Christus." (Con. Apol. I. 744.)

38. "Who suffered for our salvation, descended into Hell, rose again the third day from the dead." Against Menander, who denied that Christ was crucified, except *per umbram* (Philast. c. 32); against Cerinthus, who

modum est una persona quilibet homo, anima sc. rationalis et caro, ita sit Christus una persona, Verbum et homo."—August. Ench. ch. xxxvi. In the dialogue between a heretic and Rusticus, cardinal and bishop of Fiesole, and written by the latter in the sixth century, the heretic is made to say: "Well, prythee, have not all the doctors of the Catholic Church employed this illustration, saying: 'Sicut unus est homo anima et corpus, sic unus est Christus, Deus perfectus et homo perfectus.'"—Contra Acephalos, B. M. P. x. 358.

denied the resurrection of Christ, and said it was to come (*ib.* c. 36); against the followers of Marcus (*ib.* 42), and Apelles, who denied the resurrection of the flesh (*ib.* 47); against the Apollinarians, who affirmed that the death and resurrection of Christ were phantastic and not real. (Ath. I. 739, 743.)¹ "At His death His body descended to the grave; His soul to Hell (μέχρι αἰδου)." (Ath. c. Apol. I. 745.)

39. "He ascended into Heaven; He sitteth on the right hand of the Father, God Almighty; from whence

¹ See also Greg. of Nyssa, *De Anima*; St. Augustine, *De Civitate Dei.* xxii. 20. How it should have been asserted that the Fathers did not hold, from the days of Athanasius, the resurrection of the mortal, natural bodies of men (*corpora sua*) spiritualized and glorified, I should be at a loss to understand, had I not so frequently seen opinions which they never held attributed to them by those who had scarcely read a page of their writings. They teach most distinctly, that as Christ rose from the grave in that natural body which He took of the Virgin Mary, in its full complement, as a natural body, we also shall rise in the same manner. They teach that the body is as essential a part of man as the soul, and that the resurrection of one without the other would be incomplete. "*Anima rationalis et caro unus est homo,*"—not the soul alone or the flesh alone. As to the silly remark of Mr. Ffoulkes, who asks what body? childhood, manhood, or mature age? I beg to remind him that his scoff would apply equally to our Lord's resurrection. Does Mr. Ffoulkes imagine that he is some body now, was some body else seven years ago, and will be nobody seven years hence? What do men mean by saying that God has raised them up from a bed of sickness? Do they imagine that their bodies so risen and restored to health and comeliness are not the same bodies once covered "with wounds and putrefying sores?"

He shall come to judge the quick and the dead.” Denied by Seleucus and others, who affirmed that Christ did not sit in the flesh at the right hand of God, but put off His flesh. (Phil. c. 35.)

40. “At whose coming all men shall rise again with their bodies, and shall give account of their own works.” Against Valentinian, who denied the resurrection of the body (Philast. c. 38), and the Proclianites, who denied that Christ had come in the flesh, and taught men not to expect resurrection and judgment. (*Ib.* 56.) See also Ath. I. 463.

41. “And they that have done good shall go into life everlasting, and they that have done evil into everlasting fire.”

42. “This is the Catholic Faith, which except a man believe faithfully he cannot be saved.”

The foregoing extracts will, I think, be sufficient to convince all men of ordinary candour that the similarity between the teaching of St. Athanasius and of the Athanasian Creed is sufficiently close to justify the Church of England in retaining that Creed, unimpaired and unaltered, as a “Confession of our Christian Faith,” whether it was written by Athanasius himself or compiled from his writings. In the former part of my book I have proved that the expressions most objected

to as erroneous and heretical by Dean Stanley and Professor Swainson are in strict accordance with the teaching of the Church in all ages; nor has any attempt been made to controvert the arguments produced on that head. To my mind, this fact is worth something. It is not an indifferent matter whether the uniform teaching of the Catholic Church be in favour of a particular Creed, or not. It is more than the approbation of a few, or even of many, Englishmen, in this latter half of the nineteenth century, who have not studied these subjects, and whose knowledge, whatever it be, is generally theoretical, and not based on any wide experience. They object to the Athanasian Creed, that it offends *their* reason, as no doubt it does; and therefore instead of ruling their individual reason by the Creed, they insist that it should supersede the universal reason of the Catholic Church;—a modest assumption, characteristic of this age; but not therefore to be listened to, as some think.

And as it is worth something to have the authority and experience of the Church in favour of a particular Creed—considering what that experience is—how long and how varied—of how many ages, climates, people, and languages—I should have supposed that the deliberate rejection of such an authority, would be an act to

which thoughtful men would commit themselves very unwillingly—if at all. But that consideration I must leave to the bishops. In this portion of my book I have carried the evidence for the Creed still further—I have shown its agreement with the teaching of him who is, by universal confession, the greatest authority on all subjects connected with those truths which are insisted on in the Creed. The name of Athanasius has become a proverb. It is synonymous, in the minds even of those who reject his teaching, with surpassing genius, clear intellect, profound learning, piety of life, suffering for the truth, and a knowledge of Scripture, especially of the New Testament, in his native language, which has never been equalled, perhaps, certainly never surpassed. To reject the Athanasian Creed is, as I have shown, to reject his teaching; to reject his teaching is to reject the doctrine of the Trinity, as the Catholic Church has hitherto held it. And from whatever quarter the blow may come, and under whatever disguise, the rejection of the Athanasian Creed, or its modification, in favour of popular prejudices, is a rejection or modification of the truths of the Trinity as taught by Athanasius and the Church of Christ.¹ I

¹ "To be studious of the most blessed Athanasius is the clearest evidence of a sound mind in the greatest matters." St. Basil,

hope the great Founder of the Church will save the Church of England from this dishonour. And if it be that the Church of Ireland—instrumental to its own degradation—if other Protestant Churches, as Dean Stanley asserts—have rejected this Creed, I trust the Church of England may yet be found faithful among the faithless many; remembering there is no safe ground between infidelity and the Athanasian Creed. On this Creed Churches and nations must take their stand or expect to fall.

In concluding this portion of my subject, I will briefly indicate my reasons for supposing that the Athanasian Creed was composed before the close of the fourth century, and not at any later period. At the end of that period, the heresy of the Adoptionists appeared, and extended into the fifth century;¹ the influence of Arianism had declined; Pelagianism was becoming rampant in the West, never to be completely extinguished; and in the sixth century we meet with

Ep. 154. The bishops of St. David, Manchester, and Exeter may afford to despise Athanasius, for they are able theologians; but I, stretching out blind and feeble hands to lay hold of these great mysteries, cannot afford to do so.

¹ See Greg. of Nyssa contra Apoll.; and the Recantation of Leporius, A.D. 426. "In hoc maxime fides nostra consistit ut credamus unicum Filium Dei, *non adoptivum*, sed proprium." (Harduin. Conc. i. 1267.)

the absurdities of the Origenists. None of these errors are noticed in the Athanasian Creed. It may be thought otherwise in regard to the heresies of Nestorius and Eutyches, which occupied so large a portion of the attention of the Church in the fifth and the sixth century. Some have entertained the opinion that the Creed may have been framed with the view of counter-acting the teaching of these heresiarchs. My reasons for dissenting from this opinion are these: first, that on this hypothesis the first half of the Creed would have been superfluous; for, so far from denying any of its statements, both of these heretics would have accepted them freely, as perfectly consistent with their own teaching; whilst the second half would not have been definite enough for their refutation. As the term *Consubstantial*, at once and without dispute, clenched the nail against Arianism, so the term *θεοτόκος* was equally effective against Nestorianism, and nothing else than that. For Nestorius would not have denied that verse in the Creed, “*homo est ex substantia matris in sæculo natus*,” but would have asserted it.¹ Nor can I believe that if

¹ “Sed et Virginem Christotocon ausi sunt cum modo quodam *Theotocon* dicere. Hanc enim *Theotocon* vocantes non perhorrescunt; cum Sancti illi et supra omnem prædicationem patres per Nicæam nihil amplius de Sancta Virgine dixissent, nisi quia Dominus noster Jesus Christus incarnatus est ex Spiritu Sancto et Maria Virgine.”—

the Creed had been written in his days, the writer of it would have allowed this passage to stand as it does now without some qualification. The whole of the Creed would have been perfectly susceptible, in the minds of Nestorius and his followers, of an interpretation agreeable to their teaching. And, so far as the controversy raged exclusively respecting the relation of the divine to the human nature in Christ, the same remark will apply to Eutyches. As Nestorius would have asserted that Christ was born of the Virgin Mary, so Eutyches would have said that He was perfect God and perfect man, only that He did not remain so but His manhood was absorbed into His Godhead. Indirectly, Nestorius contradicted the unity of Christ's person (*unitas Personæ*), by multiplying it into two, human and divine; Eutyches, His perfect humanity, by making it, in effect, unsubstantial, so denying the *perfectus Deus* and *perfectus homo* of the Creed. As the Creed teaches that Christ is "One not by conversion of the Godhead into flesh," which Eutyches would have allowed; I cannot but think if it had been composed in the days of Eutychianism, it would have added a more direct protest against his errors, by

Nestorius to Celestine, Pontificum Rom. Epist. Gen. i. p. 771. Gotting. 1796.

asserting, that the Manhood, though taken into God (*assumpta in Deum*), was not consumed or absorbed by it. But I am very unwilling to dogmatize, and I submit myself in these and other matters to the better judgment and knowledge of my brethren of the Church of England.

I am, happily, relieved from the necessity of considering whether the Athanasian Creed was written in the seventh century, during the Monothelite disputes, as Dr. Swainson admits there is no probability in such a supposition.¹ I am driven, therefore, to the conclusion that the Athanasian Creed, if not the composition of Athanasius himself, could not have been written later than the Athanasian era.

These conclusions are so much at variance with a theory recently propounded by Mr. Ffoulkes, that the Creed is no better than a forgery of the age of Charlemagne, that I am reluctantly compelled to examine at some length the grounds on which Mr. Ffoulkes' opinion is founded. The way in which that theory has been received affords a striking illustration of the worth and condition of public opinion on such matters in England. On the 23rd of December last there appeared in "The Times," under the well-known signa-

¹ See Further Investigations, p. 13.

ture of *Anglicanus*, a letter published in its boldest type and most prominent columns, calling attention to Mr. Ffoulkes' work, and claiming for it a distinction over all previous inquiries in the same field. "It is the great merit of Mr. Ffoulkes," said this correspondent of "The Times," "that of all the explorers into the void created by the withdrawal of the name which gave the Creed its chief authority, and probably secured its place in the English formularies, he is one who has most vigorously grappled with the details of the subject in all their bearings." But he prudently added that Mr. Ffoulkes' style was "somewhat confused;" an assertion no reader of Mr. Ffoulkes would think of contesting; and that his conclusion must "be well sifted before it is admitted as certain."

Within little more than a week, as if to show the importance set by himself on his own caution, another letter appeared from *Anglicanus*, in the same journal,¹ assuming the absolute correctness of Mr. Ffoulkes' theory, and stating that the Creed had "no higher authority than that of Charlemagne to rest upon." Yet (harsh as it may seem to say) it is certain that, instead of sifting Mr. Ffoulkes' theory, as he had advised, *Anglicanus* had either not read it, or

¹ January 2, 1872.

had not understood it; for he stated in his letter that "the age of Charlemagne was, in some respects, *superior* to the age of Athanasius;" and that "if Alcuin were not in himself a greater man than Athanasius, Charlemagne was certainly a greater man than Constantine." It would have been impossible for *Anglicanus* to have hit upon any assertion more directly at variance with Mr. Ffoulkes' hypothesis. It is indispensable to that hypothesis that we should consider Alcuin and Charlemagne as liars and hypocrites of the worst description. Nor does Mr. Ffoulkes mince the matter.

"Let policy," he says, "be measured by success alone, and this (*sc.* the forged) naming of the Athanasian Creed was a masterpiece. But what excuse can be made for men devoted to God like Alcuin, like Paulinus himself, who could assist in propagating what *they must* have known to be a fraud and a lie." And again: "To have called it (*sc.* the Creed of Paulinus) merely 'the Faith of St. Athanasius,' need have implied no more than that, in their opinion, it had been fairly culled from his works; but to assume to speak of it, like Alcuin, as having been actually composed by him, only shows how degradingly subservient the best of men in those days were to a monarch (Charlemagne), against whose

falsifications of fact" they did not dare to protest. (Athanasian Creed, p. 258.) Active complicity, by the bye, is something more, in our minds, than not daring to protest.

If no investigations into the origin and publication of the Athanasian Creed had ever been made before, if they had been attempted only by very inferior and incompetent critics, or if Mr. Ffoulkes had discovered fresh materials, or brought to the inquiry a greater amount of learning, and more thorough acquaintance with the subject than were possessed by his predecessors, we might have been willing to accept his credentials from *Anglicanus* without that rigid sifting which *Anglicanus* recommends and disregards. But as all Mr. Ffoulkes' materials have long since been examined again and again by critics of great acuteness and learning, as the letter of Alcuin, on which Mr. Ffoulkes' theory is founded, was well known to all scholars, we are compelled to pause awhile, and inquire whether a discovery of so much importance, which flashed upon Mr. Ffoulkes at the first cursory glance, was likely, if sound, to have escaped the notice of others. Discoveries by a fresh student in a field of literature or science, already thoroughly investigated, are not generally accepted with that absence of all caution and

all inquiry such as has fallen to the lot of Mr. Ffoulkes. I am doing Mr. Ffoulkes no injustice. He tells us himself—he even makes a merit of it—that when he commenced his investigations he had not “read Waterland and other moderns.”¹ He was, on his own confession, unacquainted with the literature of the Athanasian Creed; and of the truth of his statement no one who has read his book will make the least doubt. Men who pursue a new path of discovery in utter contempt and ignorance of what their predecessors have done are certainly rewarded (shall I say punished?) for their presumption by making very great discoveries. There are no such great discoverers in nature as raw physicians, raw lawyers, raw financiers—and, let me add, as raw theologians. Mr. Ffoulkes is matched in this inquiry with predecessors of vast ability, learning and experience; by such scholars as Mabillon, Muratori, Quesnel, Frobenius, and Madrisius, whose whole lives were exclusively devoted to these and similar studies. It is possible that Mr. Ffoulkes, a late student of mediæval literature, may justify the praise of *Anglicanus*; he may have seen more than his great predecessors have seen; but we must have some better security for our

¹ Inv. p. 6.

belief than mere assertion. What then are the proofs?

In his brief translation from the letter of Alcuin, on which his whole theory is based, and one, therefore, I have a right to suppose that Mr. Ffoulkes would have studied with more than usual attention, he translates the words, "*quam plurimis vero profuturum et per-necessarium fecistis opus in Catholicæ Fidei taxatione;*" in the following way: "certainly you have achieved a work of immense profit and prime necessity *in appraising the Catholic Faith as you have.*"¹ Mr. Ffoulkes is ignorant of the meaning of the ordinary word *taxatio* (description), which is quite familiar to the readers of Carlovingian literature. And, as he has fallen into one blunder, he proceeds to fortify it by another equally gross, referring to the following: "*et in hoc opere beati Hieronymi verbis expressam taxavimus;*" *i.e.* "We have set it down" (or described it)² "in the very words of St. Jerome;" not as Mr. Ffoulkes imagines: "We have *appraised* it in the words of

¹ The Athanasian Creed, p. 228.

² If Mr. Ffoulkes had turned to Du Cange he might have found abundant evidence of this use of the word. One instance must suffice here: "*Legens litteras a vestra reverentia missas cognovi nomen Joannis in sacris diptychis scriptum. Interrogans autem inde venientes cognovi non in ordine laicorum sed in Episcoporum taxari.*"—Facund. Herm. iv. 1.

St. Jerome." And again, at page 352 he refers to it as "that appraisement of the Catholic Faith which has been learnt so long (*sic*) as the Athanasian Creed."

But to return to Mr. Ffoulkes' translation. "You have achieved," he says, "a work of immense profit and prime necessity in appraising the Catholic Faith as you have: the very thing I have so long desired myself, and so often urged upon the king, to get a symbol of the Catholic Faith, plain in meaning, and lucid in phrase, reduced *to one compendious form*, and given to all priests *in each parish of every diocese* to read and commit to memory."¹ Strictly: "In your description of the Catholic Faith, you have composed a very useful and necessary work, such as I have long wished to see; and I have often urged our lord the king to have a symbol of the Catholic Faith in the plainest meaning and most intelligible terms, brought together into a single sheet (*in unam congregaretur cartulam*), and given to the priests of every diocese (*per singulas episcopaliū regiminū*

¹ "Quam plurimis vero profuturum et pernecessarium fecistis opus in Catholicæ Fidei taxatione, quod diu optavi, et sæpius Domino Regi suasi, ut symbolum Catholicæ Fidei planissimis sensibus et sermonibus luculentissimis in unam congregaretur cartulam, et per singulas episcopaliū regiminū parochias omnibus daretur legenda memoriæque commendanda." (Ep. xcvi. ed. Froben.)

parochias) to be read and committed to memory." Not one word is there of "compendious form," or "parish priests," any more than there is of appraisement; but all these are due to the imagination or the unskilfulness of Mr. Ffoulkes.

Careless in these matters where at least he was bound to be rigidly accurate, it is no wonder that he falls into errors less obvious. He credits the Abbé Migne with various statements with which the Abbé had no more to do than his printers.¹ What is more startling still, he assigns to Migne the date A.D. 800² of the letter just mentioned, and then adds (p. 229), "This letter ends with a reference to Spain,"—(the reference is in the middle of the letter, not at the end),—"but in marked contrast connects it with Adoptionism no longer. That cloud had disappeared wholly from the horizon. . . . This letter accordingly cannot have been written till Adoptionism had been extinguished; in other words, before A.D. 800." Astounding! Why, it was in consequence of its connection with Adoptionism, that Frobenius, the last editor of Alcuin—not the Abbé Migne, who reprinted Frobenius—assigned the date of A.D. 800

¹ See pp. 224, 225, 226.

² "We find Alcuin writing again—A.D. 800, according to Migne."—Athanas. Creed, p. 225.

to this letter, which is undated in the original, and on this ground alone. "Now, a second time," says Alcuin, "the ancient serpent, from the thickets of Spain and the caves of envenomed perfidy, is endeavouring to rear his head, bruised, not by the club of Hercules, but by the club of the Gospel, and is mingling afresh his cursed poison in the cups of his former iniquity." To which Frobenius appends this note: "He appears to refer to the pertinacity of Eliantus (the great leader of the Adoptionists) after the conversion of Felix, and *therefore* this letter refers to A.D. 800." Mr. Ffoulkes may, if he pleases, reject the hypothesis of Frobenius. He may stick to his assertion that the passage has no connexion with Adoptionism. But he cannot play fast and loose at the same time. He cannot reject the only ground upon which the date is assigned, and retain the date upon no ground whatever. Either the letter *does* apply to the revival of Adoptionism in Spain, and the date of it is A.D. 800; or it does not apply to such revival, and the date is uncertain. It may be earlier, or it may be later. Mr. Ffoulkes is welcome to either alternative. But either is fatal to his theory.

What that theory is I now proceed to examine; and I am sure that if it had been understood it would have

found little favour even with *Anglicanus* himself or with Mr. Ffoulkes' staunchest admirers. This, then, is Mr. Ffoulkes' theory. He imagines that in the year A.D. 800 Paulinus composed a Creed, exactly resembling the Athanasian Creed, and sent it the same year to Alcuin. He is not rash enough to imagine that Paulinus deceived Alcuin by affixing the name of Athanasius to this production. That he well knows is impossible. For Alcuin himself distinctly refers to it as the composition of Paulinus, and is lavish in the praise of its eloquence—curious praise, certainly, if it had been the Athanasian Creed. Now, as early as March, A.D. 802, at a Chapter held at Aix, it is commanded, in one of the enactments, that "*The Catholic Faith* be diligently read (studied) by the bishops and priests, and preached to all the people." The word *legatur* must evidently refer to a Creed, and as it is made incumbent on the Clergy, there can be little doubt what Creed or Profession of Faith is here meant. And if there could be, it is dispelled, by the enactments of a General Chapter held the same autumn, in which, we find among other things¹ which all ecclesiastics are

¹ In the same Chapter we have the heads of an examination to which the priests were subjected before they were ordained. Among them is the following: "Interrogo vos presbyteri quomodo credetis ut *Fidem Catholicam* teneatis, seu *Symbolum et Orationem Domini-*

commanded to learn, “ *The Catholic Faith* of St. Athanasius, *et cætera quæcumque de fide*, the Apostle’s Creed (*Symbolum Apostolicum*), the Lord’s Prayer, and other things.” Now these Chapters were attended by the emperor in person, by the ecclesiastics, and temporal nobility; by all, in short, whose learning and rank were likely to add weight and authority to the decisions of such assemblies. We have, then, unimpeachable evidence that in the year A.D. 802, and apparently in the spring of it, certainly by the autumn, the Creed of St. Athanasius was already in the hands of the clergy *everywhere*;—that it had already become so well known as to be the subject of examination;—that it was authoritatively enjoined upon all, and not by one or two persons, who might be in the secret, but by the whole council of the nation, emperor, bishops, dukes, and earls. Supposing, then, that Paulinus was the real author of the Creed, as Mr. Ffoulkes assumes, the question he had to solve was, how, between A.D. 800 and 802, this Creed of Paulinus could assume the name of Athanasius, and impose itself upon the whole church of Germany, without one dissentient voice

cam quomodo sciatis.” And again, as early as A.D. 794: “*Ut Fides Catholica Sanctæ Trinitatis, et Oratio Dominica atque Symbolum Fidei* (the Apostles’ Creed) *omnibus prædicetur et tradatur.*” Capit. p. 197, Migne.

from orthodox or heretic, as the genuine Creed of Athanasius.

If Mr. Ffoulkes' theory be true, we must conclude that Alcuin, then on the verge of the grave, and withdrawing as much as he could from public life for holy preparation, was the greatest of dissemblers and hypocrites, and the worst enemy of the faith he professed to uphold. For if others who knew nothing of the origin of the Creed might be deceived, it was not possible that he could be. He must have known that it was not the work of Athanasius, but of Paulinus. And as he quotes the Creed, as the Creed of Athanasius (according to Mr. Ffoulkes), he must have been guilty of a double wrong; first, in allowing a forgery of the gravest kind, which he knew to be a forgery, to be palmed upon the Church, of which he was a member, without protesting against it; and, secondly, in actively promoting the forgery, by quoting as the work of Athanasius what he knew was the production of his friend and contemporary Paulinus.

It will be asked what evidence has Mr. Ffoulkes for such a monstrous supposition? What authority can he urge in defence of an hypothesis so utterly incredible in itself, so inconsistent with justice to others, so derogatory to the characters of all concerned? None whatever; he has none; he knows full well that there

is none. Are we, then, to accept his surmises in the place of history? Are we to believe that Charlemagne, Alcuin, Paulinus, and all the bishops of that age, were remorselessly engaged in concocting a gigantic forgery—that either there was not an honest man among them—or not one capable of exposing so pernicious a fraud—that it was so complete and so perfectly kept that not a whisper, then or afterwards, ever escaped, until Mr. Ffoulkes detected the abominable crime? Such a belief offers no difficulty to Mr. Ffoulkes, for he is possessed with an implacable hatred of the Latin Church, its theologians, its bishops, its creeds, and its rulers. He believes that it and they have been engaged in one long crusade against the civil and religious liberties of men; and, as evil always presents itself to him that thinks evil, he feels no difficulty in attributing the vilest motives and misconduct to those whom he dislikes. The Latin Church, and those we have been accustomed to reckon among its greatest and noblest teachers, is little better in his eyes than “the mystery of iniquity,” which has been working among us so long a time.¹ Happily, he has one consolation—he thinks that the true faith has been “loyally preserved” by the Greek Church. That Church he

¹ See p. 363 *sq.*

admires, not for its superior purity, not for its freedom from idolatry, not for its missionary efforts among the heathen, not for what it has done in converting our Teutonic forefathers, and preserving for us the remains of ancient civilization—all these are as nothing in his eyes—but because it still rigidly denies the Procession of the Holy Spirit, and reckons all men as heretics who think otherwise!¹

I have said enough, and more than enough, to show the absurdity of Mr. Ffoulkes' hypothesis even on his own data; but when we come to examine the data themselves nothing can be more flimsy, vague, and contradictory. He has assumed them upon the slightest authority, often on no authority whatever, sometimes upon ignorance of the real authority. If the work (*libellus*) of Paulinus to which Alcuin refers be the Athanasian Creed, as Mr. Ffoulkes insists, how is it that he has never once considered how far such expressions as those in which Alcuin describes it would be applicable to the Creed: *sc.*, “most delightful for the beauty of its style” (*eloquentiæ*); or, the “gold-vomiting depths of its spiritual meanings;” or, how far it answers to Alcuin's wish for a Creed “very plain in meaning, and in very perspicuous

¹ See p. 374.

terms," in order to avoid diversity of opinions, and bruise the serpent's head of Heresy? How came it if Alcuin wished to have a Creed to suppress diversities of opinion and confute heresy that the Athanasian Creed, supposing it were the work of Paulinus, contained no direct denunciation of those heresies which Paulinus and Alcuin were most anxious to condemn? How is it that in his work *De Trinitate*, written some time after the supposed date of the Athanasian Creed, Alcuin should still find it necessary to denounce the heresy of Adoption in plain terms, and forbear the use of them in the Athanasian Creed? How was it that he should touch on all the topics of the Creed in the same treatise, and yet never mention it by name? How comes it that Paulinus, who had signalized himself by his acts and writings against the Adoptionists, should never have inserted one single clause, one single expression even in condemnation of the Adoptionists, were it only to convince the world that he was right and these heretics were wrong? How was it that Charlemagne, if he wanted a forged Creed for political purposes, should never have used it for such purposes; and never have referred to it by name, in his acts or his writings, except on this single occasion of the Chapter at Aix (A.D. 802)? To forge a Creed which

should be purposely silent on those topics in which all the forgers were most interested—from which none of all those who were most concerned could derive the least credit or advantage—is the most incredible piece of wickedness and folly any man can imagine. To believe it we need something more than Mr. Ffoulkes' assumptions.

But there is another insuperable difficulty in the way of Mr. Ffoulkes' hypothesis, which he has not seen. He assumes, on the authority of the Abbé Migne, that this letter of Alcuin's was written in the year A.D. 800. The able editor of the works of Paulinus assigned it, with much greater probability, to A.D. 796; and he thinks that the "libellus" referred to is a Creed in verse, consisting of one hundred and fifty-one lines by the same Paulinus, presented by him to Charlemagne, and, by his order, forwarded to Alcuin.¹ Whoever considers the terms in which Alcuin speaks of the work of Paulinus, the extravagant admiration felt for Latin poetry in his age, will be inclined to think that "the gold-vomiting depths" of eloquence are more likely to refer to a religious poem than to the cautious language of the Athanasian

¹ "Regula fidei metrico promulgata stili mucrone."—Opera Paulini, p. 169, ed. Madris.

Creed. Frobenius, the able editor of Alcuin's work—not the Abbé Migne, as Mr. Ffoulkes absurdly imagines—thought that this poem of Paulinus was scarcely of sufficient importance to justify the praises of Alcuin, or be committed to memory by the priesthood of every diocese, and therefore he adds: “I think that this description (*taxatio*) of the faith, and explanation of the whole Creed, must be some other work of Paulinus which has not yet seen the light;”¹ but he never dreamt, any more than any other reader of Alcuin would dream, that this “libellus” was the Athanasian Creed in disguise. Consequently, Frobenius rejected the date assumed by Madrisius, and because the letter referred (as he thought) to the revival of the Adoptionist heresy in Spain by Elipandus² he assigned it to A.D. 800. I think he laid too great a stress upon the mere complimentary terms of a letter addressed to an ancient friend, and overlooked the fact that, though this work of Paulinus might be an explanation of the Creed (*Catholicæ Fidei taxatio*), it could not have been very prolix, as it was comprised in a single sheet (*in unam cartulam*). Further, whilst Alcuin in this letter speaks positively of the revival of the Spanish heresy, in a

¹ See his note to the letter. Alcuin. Opera i. p. 147.

² “Nunc iterum antiquus serpens de dumis Hispanici ruris,” &c.

letter written the very same year, according to Frobenius, and sent to a lady with his book against the Adoptionists, he distinctly states that he was not certain whether any of the roots of the ancient pravity had yet shot forth again.¹ I may add, moreover, that in a letter addressed to the monks of Lyons,² and certainly not later than A.D. 798, there is the same complaint, as in this letter to Paulinus, of the Spanish heresy; the same expression (*Symbolum Catholicæ Fidei*);³ the same denunciation against the Spanish innovation upon the trine immersion in Baptism. These facts are rather in favour of the earlier date adopted by Madrisius than the later one supported by Frobenius. But Mr. Ffoulkes cares for none of these things. Having assumed on the supposed authority of the Abbé Migne that the letter of Alcuin to Paulinus must have been written in A.D. 800, having assumed on evidence equally uncertain that this "appraisement of the Catholic Faith" cannot have been the poetical "*Regula Fidei*" of Alcuin's correspondent, straightway he

¹ "Nesciens ne forte quid novi ex prioribus pravitatis radicibus alicubi pullulasset."—Opera i. p. 921.

² Epist. lxxv.

³ This is noticeable; for when Alcuin refers in the latter part of the same letter to the Apostles' Creed, he uses the words *Fides Symboli Apostolici*. P. 109.

assumes it must have been the Athanasian Creed. With equal ease he assumes all else that he ought to prove, building up one step upon another after the same fashion. He assumes that Paulinus kept "a Common-Place book," in which he wrote down extracts from whatever came in his way (p. 340), "not," he tells us, in a fit of generosity, "in bad faith" (p. 346); although how he is to reconcile this admission with his previous assertion that Alcuin and Paulinus were ready accomplices in the fraud of passing off this *libellus* for a genuine work of Athanasius, I cannot understand. He assumes that Charlemagne gave it "the finishing stroke" (p. 338), and may have added the damnatory clauses; and this compound of fraud and hypocrisy, in which he thinks it by no means strange, but somewhat natural, that Charlemagne, Alcuin, and Paulinus should all have engaged, appeared "within a year" under the name of that Saint by which it has since been known (p. 273), and within "a year later" was cited by Alcuin himself "*for the first and only time in his life*" (p. 273).¹

It is then on this single instance in the writings of Alcuin, that, so far as he is concerned, all Mr. Ffoulkes'

¹ Mr. Ffoulkes has forgotten to tell his readers where. The reference will be found in the Treatise, De Processione S. S. p. 750.

laborious pile of fraud and forgery is built. Against Paulinus himself there is not the shadow of proof. But the work to which Mr. Ffoulkes alludes is not supposed to be genuine. Though addressed to the Emperor, it does not bear Alcuin's name; and was probably composed A.D. 809. But if the work in question is genuine, and was written after A.D. 800 (and there is no precise evidence as to its date), we are driven to the absurdity of supposing that Alcuin volunteered a quotation from a spurious Creed of his contemporary, Paulinus, knowing it to be spurious, under the name of the Creed of Athanasius, merely for the pleasure, or merit, of quoting a falsehood; for his argument is complete without it. An author and a theologian of irreproachable life and fame, and at that time on the brink of the grave (for he died A.D. 804), must have been strangely infatuated with the love of lying to have been guilty of so useless and so wicked an act.¹

On what authority Mr. Ffoulkes attributes it to 802 or 803, when Alcuin was too feeble to write or to travel (he died in 804), I am at a loss to discover. Was it our old friend the Abbé Migne?

¹ It would be quite useless to ask Mr. Ffoulkes in what part of the year A.D. 800 he thinks this celebrated letter was written, or upon what authority, beyond his ridiculous mistake about the Abbé Migne, he attributes it to A.D. 800. The question apparently never entered his brains. Yet let my readers consider. In March, A.D. 800, Charles left Aix for a pilgrimage to Tours, where he was

Meanwhile, I will not take advantage of Mr. Ffoulkes' own admission, that after all this Creed is not the

detained some time by the ill health of his queen Luitgardis, who died in June following. That Alcuin was not with him at the time of her death appears from a letter of condolence which he addressed to Charlemagne on the occasion. In August the same year Charles proceeded on his journey to Rome, and received the imperial crown in December. I can scarcely think that any one will suppose that he was engaged in the gross fraud with which he is charged by Mr. Ffoulkes in the summer of A.D. 800, and his journey to Italy puts the autumn and winter of that year out of the question. We have only then a couple of months, or a little more, in the earlier half of A.D. 800 for the correspondence of Alcuin with Paulinus, their concoction of the fraud with Charlemagne, and the preparations necessary for obtaining the consent of all the German bishops that their clergy (or, in Mr. Ffoulkes' phrase), "all priests in each parish of every diocese" should be ordered to read and be examined in the Athanasian Creed, of the name and existence of which no one had heard a whisper till then!

But if the order in which the Epistles stand in the editions of Frobenius and Migne be at all correct, Mr. Ffoulkes is deprived even of this small consolation. For it is clear that this letter to Paulinus can only have been written in the winter or late autumn of A.D. 800. For in a preceding letter Alcuin mentions the departure of Charles for Tours (Ep. 87), writes another of condolence on the death of his wife (Ep. 90), complains of suffering fever from the dog-days (*canicularibus flammis*) (Ep. 92 and 93); and as all these letters precede in order of time that to Paulinus (according to the ablest authorities), we have no alternative except to suppose that this last was written in the autumn of A.D. 800. Nor, indeed, is any other supposition possible; for it was only between A.D. 799 and the earlier months of A.D. 800, that the Adoptionist heresy had passed away, and this letter speaks of its revival. But then Charles was in Italy; and did not return until the end of June, A.D. 801, when Alcuin was ill of a fever, unfit for work, and unable to travel; and so he continued for some time (Ep. 101, 104, 106, 108). We

production of the age of Charlemagne, but is "from first to last a veritable mosaic" of passages "found again and again in writers anterior to the ninth century!" (p. 318). The conclusion then is that Paulinus did not invent the Athanasian Creed, but he put it together; and therefore it is not exclusively the theology of Charlemagne, but "of writers anterior to the ninth century." Many will be contented with that concession; whether Mr. Ffoulkes' admirers will be I do not care to decide. Of course, Mr. Ffoulkes will assert that these passages are detached from their context, and made to "say what they never meant;" but on that we shall hold our own opinion until we have something better than bare assertion. And seeing that after 375 mortal pages of such writing as was never read, Mr. Ffoulkes so innocently surrenders the cause for which he had been beating the air so long, I will take the liberty of calling his attention to a concession he has made that is even more damaging. In the Ambrosian Library at Milan, Montfaucon, the editor of Athanasius, found a Latin copy of the

are now late in A.D. 801. In A.D. 802 the Athanasian Creed is ordered to be read at a general chapter. In what period, then, of the years 800 or 801 does Mr. Ffoulkes think that Charlemagne, Paulinus, and Alcuin could have met and concocted their nefarious project?

Creed in a MS. of the *eighth* century, written in Lombard characters. This MS., says Mr. Ffoulkes, taking his information from Waterland, had, by Muratori, the great Italian antiquarian, been placed a century earlier (p. 303). We have, then, the highest authority of the two greatest palæographers, and of the largest experience in these matters, that this MS. of the Creed is not later than the eighth century, and possibly may be earlier.¹ If this be so, then Mr. Ffoulkes' supposition that the Creed was first composed in the ninth century is null and void. But as this MS. contained, besides the Creed, other treatises by different authors, all of which were in the same hand, as Montfaucon tell us, and of the same antiquity, we must suppose that this MS. was derived from one still earlier, for no one will imagine that any of these tracts were in the handwritings of their authors. Against such testimony it is useless for Mr. Ffoulkes to contend, in his usual potential style, that possibly the MS. may be later; to which the only fit answer is, that possibly it may be earlier. We should prefer the judgment of Montfaucon, and even of Muratori, who had seen the MS., to that of Mr. Ffoulkes, even if he had seen it, which he has not done.

¹ Montfaucon, *Diar. Ital.* p. 18.

Mr. Ffoulkes is strong in the potential mood. It is *possible* that the letter which is the cause of all this controversy may have been written in the year 800 ; it is equally possible, and far more than probable, that it was not. It is *possible* that the Confession of Faith referred to in it may have been the anonymous Creed of St. Athanasius ; it is equally possible, and more than probable, that it was not. It is *possible* that Charlemagne, Alcuin, and Paulinus may have been engaged in the wicked conspiracy of converting the Creed of Paulinus into the Athanasian Creed, and by a forged title have imposed it on the bishops and the whole clergy of Germany ; it is equally possible, and much more than probable, that they were not. *Anglicanus* and others have pledged their credit to the certainty and accuracy of Mr. Ffoulkes' theory ; it is possible they may be right ; but it is equally possible, and far more probable, that they may be wrong.¹

¹ I wish to part friendly with Mr. Ffoulkes, and leave him to bury his dead ashes in peace. But there is a note in his book, at p. 286, in which he says : " Because M. Petit printed this collection in the same volume with Archbishop Theodore's Penitential (I wrote, *Pœnitentiale*), Professor Brewer, by a strange oversight, speaks of this canon as *in* the Penitential." With Mr. Ffoulkes' leave, I stated no such thing. I said (Ath. C. Vindicated, p. 5), " two references to the Creed, anterior, *apparently*, to the age of Charlemagne, and unnoticed by Waterland, will be found in the Pœnitentiale of Archbishop Theodore, *published by Petit, from a*

But there is a large, if not an increasing class of objectors, who hate the Athanasian Creed, not because "it savours of heresy," or, indeed, because it is unscriptural, but simply because it is a Creed. These have found an eloquent and popular exponent in a living writer, who has told them that "There is a progressive tendency to forget all of the belief except the formularies, or to give it a dull and torpid assent, as if accepting it on trust dispensed with the necessity of realizing it in consciousness." "Then," he says, "are seen the cases, so frequent in this age of the world as almost to form the majority, in which the

collection of ancient canons." That is, in other words: "two references will be found in a collection of ancient canons, published by Petit, in his edition of the Pœnitentiale of Archbishop Theodore." "Theodori Pœnitentiale" is the running title of Petit's work; and I should just as soon have imagined that any scholar, knowing anything about the subject, would have misunderstood my meaning, as Mr. Ffoulkes has done, as if in referring to the Laws of the Conqueror in Wheloc's Bede, he should tax me with saying the Laws were in Bede.

Moreover, I said that these canons "were *apparently* anterior to the age of Charlemagne;" an expression utterly absurd if I had meant Theodore's Pœnitentiale itself, and not the illustrative documents found in Petit's edition of it—seeing that the Pœnitentiale *must* have been written in the sixth century, and Charlemagne lived in the eighth and ninth. For the real importance of the reference in question, the reader should consult the Brothers Ballerini, Opera Leonis III. p. 953. The evidence they produce for the great antiquity of the Creed is not to be set aside by the free and easy criticisms of Mr. Ffoulkes.

Creed remains as it were outside the mind, encrusting and petrifying it against all other influences addressed to the higher parts of our nature; manifesting its¹ power by not suffering any fresh and living conviction to get in, but itself doing nothing for the mind or heart, except standing sentinel over them to keep them vacant." "Strong words these," adds the editor of a provincial journal, from whose columns they are quoted, "but too true." "Strong words," I admit, but the truth of them has to be examined; for strong words, according to the popular maxim, are not generally the indications of a very strong stomach.

I need scarcely remark that the whole tenor of this argument, ingenious as it may seem to a thoughtless reader, is entirely besides the question, and so far utterly worthless. It is not derived from the consideration of what Creeds are in themselves, or from their essential tendencies, but from the ordinary misuse of them; unless, indeed, this writer is prepared to maintain that it is in the nature of Creeds themselves to petrify the higher parts of our nature, and exclude all fresh and living convictions. If he meant to assert this, he was bound to point out the necessary connexion between the use of a Creed and this harden-

¹ Whose? The Creed, I suppose.

ing effect of it ; he ought to have been able to show that the use of a Creed by the pious and devout must lead to the disastrous results he here describes. Is he then prepared to assert that it is an inevitable tendency in the majority of thoughtful and devout men that the Creed should remain outside the mind, encrusting and petrifying it against all spiritual influences ? If so, on what evidence does he make this assertion ? What is the extent of his experience ? Have such men told him so, or is it only his surmise ? Testimony the very reverse of this might be produced in abundance ;—testimony of fathers and mothers reverently using the Creeds, and teaching their children to use them. Testimony of the clergy, who have attended the bed-side of the sick and the dying—of the poor especially, and of those who know—as I have reason to know—that never was a greater libel put forth than this, viz., “that the Creed does nothing for the mind or heart, except standing sentinel over them to keep them vacant.” Though the falsehood may be unintentional, no falsehood is greater than this.

But if the writer means to say, that in the majority of cases to which he refers he implies only that the careless, worldly, and undevout, grow more careless and undevout by a vapid assent to words which they

utter, but never realize in their consciousness, his objection will reach much further than the Creeds. He might, on the same ground, object to all forms and books of devotion, to the reading of Scripture, to the use of the Lord's Prayer. Are these always realized in the consciousness of men? Do they never become formal with the formalist, remaining outside the minds and hearts of men? Is it not the inevitable consequence of these, also, if they are coldly and torpidly used, to petrify the conscience against all noble influences addressed to the higher parts of our nature? Or is this the exclusive tendency of Creeds? All this flourish, then, of fine writing amounts, if strictly examined, to this: that if Creeds be abused they are liable to very bad consequences—a platitude no one would think of contesting. So is meat and drink, the light of the sun, the air we breathe, and the art of fine writing. Are we then to starve, or commit suicide, or cease to pen essays?

But this writer will tell us that Creeds are apt to be misused, because they are Creeds. He means, that written forms of belief, like written prayers, because they are fixed forms, have a tendency to become formal; and the belief is forgotten in the formulary. Of course if this were so the worst gift of God to the

Church would be a written Gospel, and men were happier with an oral Gospel. Then, also, instead of four Gospels, we should have been better with fifty; for they could not so easily have been read over and over again and fixed in the memory; which, according to this writer's argument, is the worst evil that can befall a Christian. Then, teaching children or others to commit to memory certain verses and chapters more nearly affecting the great mysteries of our belief is the greatest harm we can do them. Then, going over and over again certain portions of Holy Scripture is the surest way of missing their meaning and spiritual importance; for all these religious exercises, it cannot be denied, have the same tendency as this writer deprecates in the Creed, to make the great truths of religion familiar to the mind, and blunt their living power. Then, also, extempore Gospels, extempore prayers, extempore sermons, open the mind to those fresh and living convictions which it is the progressive tendency of written ones to keep out; and whilst dissent is essentially spiritual by virtue of these things, the Church of England is essentially unspiritual for the want of them, forgetting "all of the belief except the formularies."

If this be the necessary consequence of written

Creeds and the repetition of them, I wonder our author should have stopped here. Why did he not carry out his argument to its legitimate consequences? It would have applied equally well to art and to literature; and as our Universities are fond of novelties, they might have taken a lesson for the education of youth from this diatribe against Creeds. If the repetition of great truths such as those which are contained in the Creeds begets familiarity, and familiarity is the parent of dull and torpid assent, the best method for understanding a poet would be never to study him; still more if you wanted to realize, in your consciousness, his inner and spiritual meaning. When Professor Ruskin insists so much on the careful and watchful inspection of the great master-pieces of art—inspection so long, patient and watchful until the very style, treatment, and spirit of the artist become an unconscious creed in the mind of his observer, he is, according to the reasoning of this writer, shutting out the student from all influences addressed to the higher parts of his nature. Nothing can be more absurd, nothing more at variance with all experience. We never realize the spirit and excellence of great truths until they have become familiar to us as creeds, and, like creeds, have been tested and measured, and turned

round and round by long and daily experience. Ten years, twenty years, thirty years, a long-remembered passage of a poet, a verse in the Bible, an expression in the Creed, shall lie dormant in the mind, and never wake up to living energy and power, until age, or sickness, or the course of events, have suddenly developed them, all at once, in their instantaneous beauty, sublimity, or majesty. Men may be as formal without creeds as with them—as cold, as bigoted, as exclusive, as uncharitable, as dull and petrified to noble influences, without formularies of faith, as the most determined advocate of formularies. In fact, more so. For the latter has at least the advantage of a continual protest against the idols of his own heart and brain in the formulary which he uses; and there may come to him a time when it may cease to become a formulary and become a living influence. But the man who trusts only to the forms and formularies of his own brains is delivered over to a hopeless idolatry; his is a vanity and vexation of spirit out of which, by his own efforts, he can never escape.

But this author does not understand even the elements of the question he undertakes to solve. For the question is not as to the abstract worth of a written as against a non-written Creed; but whether in a religious society so constituted as the Church of

England it would be possible to dispense altogether with all positive forms of belief. He who accepts the Creeds of the Church of England is not prevented, on that account, from expressing his faith in whatever way he pleases, in his own private devotions. He may, if he likes it better, draw his own creed fresh and fresh from Scripture ; open his heart to its direct and immediate influences ; and it is absurd to suppose, as this writer does, that his assent to a Creed, or his joining in it one day out of seven, can counteract those “fresh and living convictions” to which a devout mind is open habitually that feels its dependence upon God, and is seeking communion with Him. Still more absurd is it to suppose that such petrifying influences can arise from the Athanasian Creed, which at the utmost is not repeated in the Church more than twelve times in the whole year, and not oftener than three or four times in the hearing of ordinary churchgoers. To accuse it, therefore, of “a progressive tendency,” inducing men “to forget all of belief except the formulary,” is a gratuitous objection, neither justified by the fact nor realized by experience. If this writer thinks that the mind of man is at all times and under all conditions fitted to rest exclusively on its own efforts, without external

aids—that its faith is always alike vigorous, and its devotion always alike pure and fervent, in health or in sickness, in deep depression, or overwhelmed with unexpected cares—that it can always soar, and never flags with broken wing—is always fresh and free, and never experiences languor, dissatisfaction and weariness ;—even then, though he might think that his own spontaneous confession of faith were to be preferred to any written Creed whatever, yet would he not be justified in despising Creeds altogether. In this world men need all the help they can get in their spiritual warfare ; and he who despises any, either does not estimate that warfare as he ought, or is overconfident of his own powers.

But, as I have said, it is not a question of Creed or no Creed, or of the abstract advantages of one over the other, but what is the duty of a religious society, like the Church of England, in this matter, and whether it can dispense with fixed Creeds and forms of devotion. That all societies, whether religious or not, must have certain laws and rules of their own, and that such laws must be binding on their individual members, no one will be so hardy as to deny, for, in fact, no society can exist without them. And then, the question is not as against set forms, or written rules of communion,

but as to more or less ; not against Creeds as opposed to no Creeds, but whether the Creeds we have are superfluous or not, and some of them had better be dispensed with. His general argument against the petrifying influences of formularies is wholly irrelevant, and if pushed to its legitimate consequences would be fatal to all society under any form. If it be urged that there are religious societies in England, such as the Dissenters, which have no creeds, and yet continue as dissenting societies ; I reply, that is, because dissent is of the essence of dissent ; and whether the dissenter breaks away from the parent stock or from the Church of England he remains a dissenter still ; and, further, dissent is measured, and in some degree fixed, by its distance from that which is positive in the Church of England. I need not add that the centrifugal tendencies of dissent are repressed by the repression of the Church of England ; by the direct and indirect influences of its teaching, by its theology, its literature, its Creeds, its example. Moreover, all forms of dissent are most lasting, stable, and popular, in proportion as they differ the least from the Church of England, and most nearly imitate its teaching. So the obligations of dissent to the Church of England are infinite ; appropriating in reality what it rejects only in appearance ;

imbibing a consistency not its own from the teaching and influence of its supposed antagonist ; resisting the danger of overweening individualism by the Catholicity of its rival.

Does then this writer really imagine that in a body so constituted as the Church of England it would be advantageous to dispense with its written Creeds, and allow every individual teacher to set up a creed for himself, and impose it upon his congregation ? Or would he advise us to reverse the process, and empower every congregation to impose its creed upon its pastor ? Does he think that this would tend to unanimity, peace, and edification ; or that creeds so derived would be so large, catholic, and expressive ; so founded on the knowledge of men's spiritual wants, and the diversified experience of ages, that they would cease to exercise those petrifying influences of which he complains in the present Creeds of the Church ? Does he think that the haphazard outpouring of any man's individual spirit would open his own mind, or that of his hearers, more freely to fresh and living convictions than the whole mind of the Church as deliberately expressed in its Creeds ? Is, then, the feeble, the partial, the local, the superficial, of more influence, in the long run, than the Catholic, the profound, the

matured thought gathered in from all climes, and the ripened harvest of ages? We are not accustomed to think so in other matters—in art, or literature, or law, or counsel, or morals, or politics.

But perhaps he thinks he would keep out all Creeds. Then must he forbid all teaching and all questioning, and the functions of the Church, as well as its existence as a society, must cease altogether. Then must every man be baptized and admitted into the Church with no faith, or with a false faith, and we should have the portentous spectacle of a religious society, established by its great Founder for propagation of the truth, indifferent to truth, and propagating error. Then, instead of greater unanimity in the Church, we should have perpetual discord; teacher against teacher, and pulpit answering pulpit. Then must the trumpet give an uncertain sound, and no man could prepare himself for the battle. In the confusion of voices and contradiction of tongues, it would be impossible to discern truth from falsehood; all would return to one undistinguishable chaos.

But if this supposition conducts us inevitably to so gross an absurdity, would he allow unwritten forms of belief, as he hates written ones, and restrict the functions of teachers within certain limits? If so, these limits must be defined; and that so clearly and so

positively that they cannot be mistaken. Nay, more, if they are mistaken, and a dispute arises, the power of determining that dispute must rest somewhere. Then we have come back again to fixed forms and written Creeds; for such decisions must inevitably grow into an authoritative body of *Credenda*;—that is, Creeds are nothing more than such decisions. But with this advantage over all others; that whereas it is the inevitable tendency of mankind to multiply *Credenda*, it is the essential operation of Creeds to limit them. Whilst it is the inevitable tendency of men to restrict and partialize great truths from individual, or local, or popular prejudices, it is the operation of Creeds to preserve them against such perils. For spiritual freedom there is no safeguard so sure, so enduring, so wise and moderate as written Creeds. I do not urge here one argument, that in the present relations of the Church with the State written forms of faith are indispensable, otherwise the latter could not interpose, as it does now, and render justice as it does now, between clergy and clergy, or clergy and laity; for there are some who underrate the value of an impartial and independent tribunal in their dislike at seeing a body of laymen interposing in ecclesiastical causes, although the judgment of those laymen is not

determined by laws of their own framing, but by the formularies of the Church itself. It is possible that this writer may share this dislike, and consider it as another count in the indictment against written Creeds. Therefore I forbear to press it. *

But when we come to consider these Creeds not merely as evidences of the Church's teaching, which she is bound to make clear to all men, and avoid all causes of misconception; when we consider the place they occupy in the Prayer Book as parts of a common devotion, the irrelevancy of this author's objections becomes painfully manifest. If our united devotions are to consist of joint confessions, deprecations of God's anger, professions of our faith and belief in Him as Father, Son, and Holy Spirit, of praise and gratitude, Creeds in some form (that is, expressions of our faith) must form part of such congregational service; and these Creeds must be written, must be known beforehand; otherwise, though the understanding may assent to them as soon as uttered, no man, but he that utters them, can possibly take part in them.¹ Whether

¹ It seems to me that Dissenters are quite aware of this defect, and therefore have always set great store on congregational psalmody;—and rightly so. But why, valuing as they do written hymns, they should undervalue written prayers—which are nothing more than hymns without rhyme, certainly not without metre—I do not understand.

it is desirable that congregations should go on Sunday after Sunday, and year after year, listening to one man's prayers, in which they cannot join, happily I am not called upon to decide. That question the Church has decided for itself; and very few men will dispute the wisdom of its decision, or the exquisite adaptation of its services to public devotion. In that respect the Common Prayer of the Church of England has no equal. But if the united voice of prayer and praise be a great help to devotion, there must be fixed and written forms. If, then, this writer can tell us how we can have Creeds that are not written, or how congregations can join in such Creeds, we may possibly be inclined to listen to him. Until then we must retain our Creeds, notwithstanding his imaginary objections, doing the best we can, as with all invaluable gifts, to use them for the purposes they were intended, and not to abuse them. So used no one need dread this writer's idle apprehension that they foster "a progressive tendency to forget all of the belief except the formularies," or encrust and petrify the mind against all nobler influences.

To conclude. If I am asked on what grounds I wish to retain the Athanasian Creed in the services of the Church, my reasons are as follows :

1. Because I believe, with the Church of England, that "it ought *thoroughly* to be received and believed ; for it may be proved by most certain warrants of Holy Scripture." (Art. viii.)

2. Because I cannot understand how any member of the Church of England can accept this solemn declaration of its opinion, and become a party towards removing the Creed, or any ways effacing it.

3. Because its use is enjoined upon me by the authority of the Church of England, an authority I am bound to obey until it shall have been clearly demonstrated that the Church enjoins what is neither Scriptural nor Catholic.

4. Because the Creed is in accordance with the general teaching of the Church of England, of Athanasius himself, and of all the great Fathers of the Church Catholic in all ages.

5. Because it is the fullest and most accurate explanation of the great mysteries relating to the Holy Trinity, as revealed to us in Scripture.

6. Because of all times, in none is it more necessary than in the present state of confusion and error amongst us that such a protest should exist against the erroneous notions, prevailing in the minds of clergy and laity, upon these essential verities.

7. Because no individual teaching on the subject of the Trinity can be so accurate, profound, or comprehensive, as that of the Church, set forth in the Athanasian Creed.

8. Because the danger of error in the belief of the Trinity is so subtle, constant, and active, and the consequences of such error so disastrous and irreparable, that it would be most unwise to dispense with the Creed.

9. Because in full consciousness of this danger, the Church in all ages, by its bishops and its councils, has found it necessary to put forth divers Creeds and Confessions of faith from time to time, exactly defining its belief in the Holy Trinity, and protesting against error; but as the necessity of such declarations has been in a great degree superseded by the introduction of the Athanasian Creed, if that Creed is removed no means will be left for an authoritative declaration against heresy, or none so full and satisfactory as the Athanasian Creed.

10. Because it is allowed by all, who have examined the subject, that the Creed has gathered up into itself the teaching of the Church, on the great cardinal truths of the Gospel, in all ages; and that whereas grievous errors formerly sprang up incessantly and divided the

Church, since the introduction of the Athanasian Creed such errors have scarcely appeared amongst us, or have speedily vanished.

11. Because, though the Athanasian Creed has been in use in the Church for more than nine centuries, no one has been able to convict it of false teaching; and, lastly;

12. Because so long a prescription is in itself the strongest argument in defence of its retention, until something more convincing than popular prejudice or misconception of its meaning shall be urged against it.

For the so-called damnable clauses:

1. Because these clauses are essential portions of the Creed, and cannot be separated from it.

2. Because, as narrow is the gate that leadeth to everlasting life, and the departure from it, on one side or the other, is easy, and leads to everlasting death, the Church of England ought not to depart from the precepts of its Divine Master by representing the one as less narrow than it is, and the other as less perilous; in other words, by allowing its members to believe that error is not so deadly as Scripture represents it to be.

3. Because there is a wide, permanent, everlasting distinction between right and wrong; and it is not indifferent whether a man be in the right or in the

wrong; for God is represented in Scripture as turning His face from the unrighteous, and as One “who heareth not sinners;” that is, as leaving them, if they continue in sin, to their own devices—that is, death.

4. Because if the doctrine of the Holy Trinity, as set forth in the Athanasian Creed and the teaching of the Church of England, be right, the denial of it must be wrong. And no member of the Church of England, so long as he is really a member of it, and the Creed is retained, can doubt which is right and which is wrong.

5. Because, though every man by means of this Creed has the knowledge of what is absolutely and eternally right and wrong, the application of this knowledge concerns himself alone; for he alone knows of himself how and under what circumstances he has transgressed, and has justly, by so doing, incurred the anger of God, but he does not know the hearts of other men.

6. Because, if there be this eternal and absolute difference of right and wrong which has place here, and never shall be otherwise, as it is of the utmost importance to the present and everlasting happiness of man that he should distinguish the right from the wrong, choose the one and avoid the other, so it is incumbent on the Church to insist upon this truth again and again; to cry and spare not, whether men

will hear or whether they will forbear ; and if she fail to do this, she is unfaithful to her mission, and her candlestick shall be removed.

7. Because if men really believed the Athanasian Creed, these clauses would offer to them no difficulty ; for as they would be convinced *ex intimo sensu* that the holding of them was everlasting life, so would they at once recognise that the rejection of them was everlasting death.

In conclusion, if I am asked : “ Do I then believe that such a man as Milton shall perish everlastingly because he held the tenets of Arianism ? ” my answer is as follows :

1. That the Creed does not warrant me in applying its warnings to any one but myself.

2. That I cannot tell whether Milton was an Arian, as men’s words are confused, dubious, and not always expressive of the true state of their hearts.

3. I know not what may have passed at Milton’s deathbed—whether, in the mysterious communication between God and the soul, in that dread hour, God, of His mercy, raised the veil, and chased the mist which overshadowed him.

4. If Milton did die an Arian (which I cannot determine), I believe, if he could return to earth, no man would declare more energetically than he that Arianism is everlasting death.

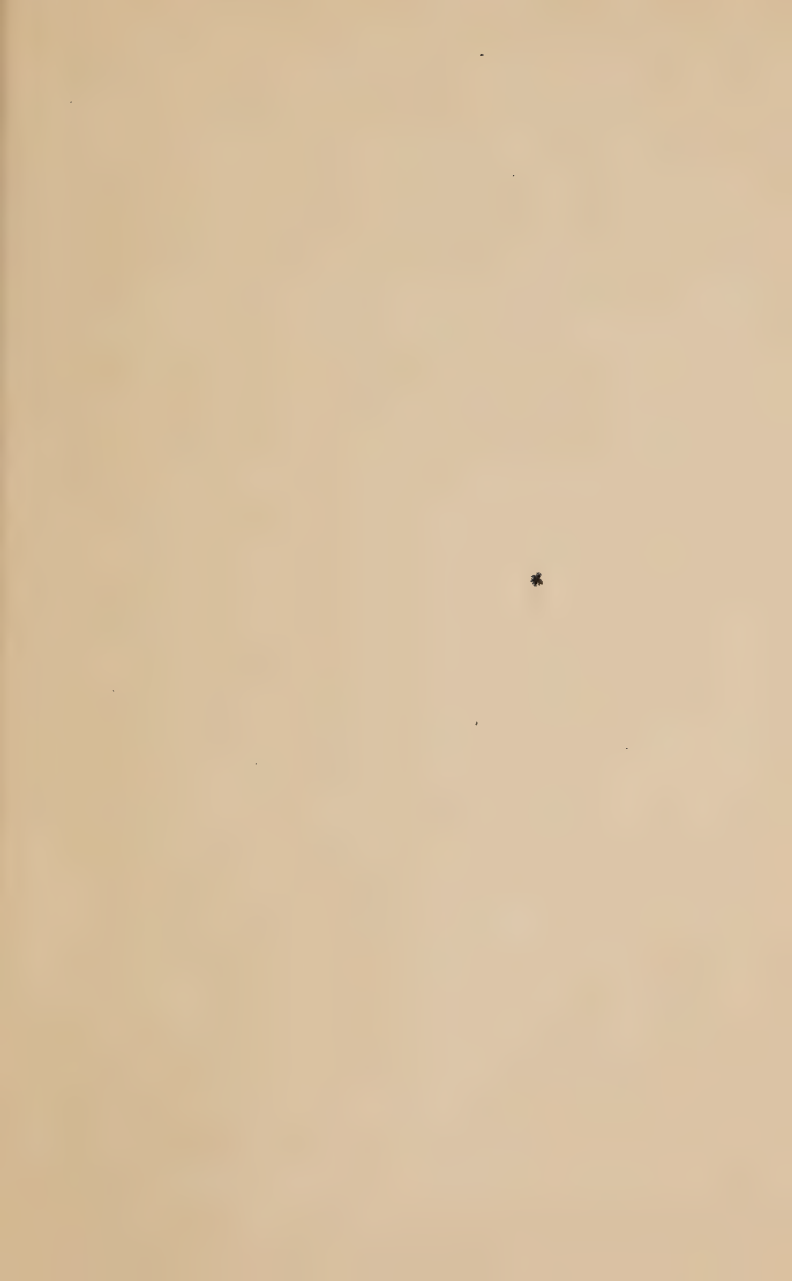
5. And the same remark applies to all others who, unhappily for themselves, fail to hold the Catholic Faith. For if that Faith be the truth—as we who are members of the Church hold it to be—all departure from it must be error. And if Truth be the law of life, departure from it must be death; and, like all the laws of God, be absolutely and universally true. It is true, then, as an absolute law, that whosoever holds not the Catholic Faith shall, as the Creed declares, perish everlastingly;—unless God, in His mercy, interfere to save men from the consequences of their transgression. We are bound to hope that He will; but whether He will or not, rests not with us to determine. And whether He will, or will not, the Law is absolute; and we are bound to accept it as such, and believe and act accordingly.

If then I am asked, “Do you believe, with the Athanasian Creed, that whosoever keeps not the Catholic Faith shall, without doubt, perish everlastingly?”—I meet my querist with the previous question: “Do you believe that the Catholic Faith is true or

false? If true, then, it is necessary to everlasting salvation, for no man was ever yet saved by error. If false, it is not the Catholic Faith; and when proved to be false I shall reject it."

Let not, then, any man suppose that he can cast a stigma upon the Athanasian Creed by declaring it unfit to be read in the public congregations of the Church, and avoid casting a stigma on the doctrines it conveys—that is to say, on the teaching of his own Church, and of the Church Catholic in all ages. The repudiation of the Athanasian Creed is the repudiation of the doctrine of the Holy Trinity, as the Church has always held it, and of belief in the doctrine as necessary to salvation. Some may protest they have no such intention; but the world will judge them by their actions, not by their words. The rejection of the Creed is the most perilous and fatal blow the Church can suffer—the greatest triumph to its opponents—its separation for ever from Catholic Christendom, and the forfeiture of its highest privilege as the Guardian and the Preacher of all Catholic verity.

THE END.





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